Photo *Lallie Charles.*

I have got a new stick
('Twas my aunt's Christmas present).
I have got a new stick,
It is frightfully chic
And delightful to lick—
The aroma is pleasant—
I have got a new stick
('Twas my aunt's Christmas present).

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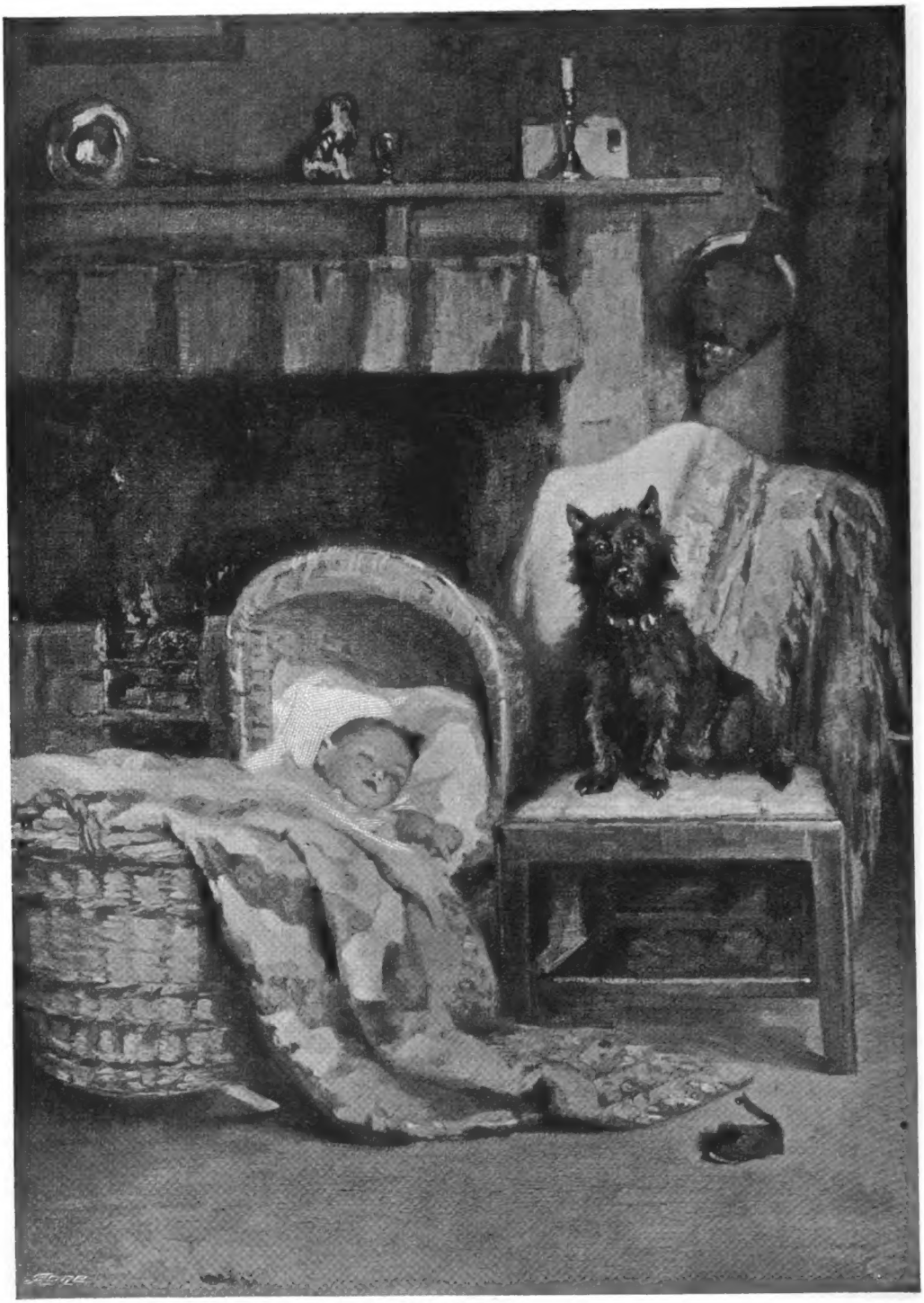

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"IN LOCO PARENTIS."
From the painting by N. Hartley.

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HUSBAND AND WIFE ON THE STAGE

Photo *R. W. Thomas.*

MR. and MRS. OSCAR ASCHE

(Miss Lily Brayton).

Mr. Asche met his wife for the first time when they were acting together in Benson's Company. That was seven or eight years ago. A greater contrast than husband and wife it is difficult to imagine, Asche imposing and Herculean—he measures over fifty inches round the chest, and the muscles of his arm might cause Sandow envy—Mrs. Asche dainty, graceful, and essentially feminine. They have this in common: they are both heart and soul in their art, and are the central attraction of every play they take part in.

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Photo *Ellis & Walery.*

MR. and MRS. FRED TERRY

(Miss Julia Neilson).

At the time of their first meeting Mr. Fred Terry and Miss Julia Neilson were members of the acting profession, but it was from the front of the house that Mr. Terry caught the first glimpse of his future wife. Shortly afterwards he was engaged by Mr. Tree, who wanted a "tall hero" to play lover to Miss Neilson.

From the first Mr. Terry seemed to take the situation seriously—certainly the love scenes went realistically well.

While playing in Dublin, Miss Neilson suggested a ride in Phœnix Park. Mr. Terry, being a complete novice on horseback, had one or two undignified spills in the presence of his intended, which, however, did not decrease her admiration for him, for not very long afterwards the marriage took place.

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Photo *Bassano.*

MR. and MRS. L'ESTRANGE

(Miss Constance Collier).

Mr. Julian L'Estrange met his future wife (Miss Constance Collier) on the stage of His Majesty's, in "Ulysses," when they were respectively god and goddess, Mr. L'Estrange playing Hermes to Miss Collier's Athene.

They were married in Margaret Street, curiously enough just opposite Mr. L'Estrange's bachelor rooms. They are a strikingly handsome pair, and enthusiastic over their newly found happiness, Mr. L'Estrange candidly confessing that he "would not be single again for anything; it is so jolly having a home of your own, don't you know." Part of their honeymoon was spent in riding together over Salisbury Plain, and they are very fond of walking to their stage engagements through the London parks.

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Photo *R. W. Thomas.*

MR. and MRS. G. P. HUNTLEY

(Miss Eva Kelly).

Mr. and Mrs. G. P. Huntley began as sweethearts in "Kitty Grey," and it speedily became apparent that their stage love-making was far from being all make-believe. A mutual sympathy sprang up between them on the subject of George Ade, an American humourist, author of "Fables In Slang," celebrated in his own country. Mrs. Huntley thought it most sensible of an Englishman so thoroughly to appreciate George Ade, and so they went on comparing notes until a point was reached when Mr. Ade's beneficent assistance was no longer necessary. Mrs. Huntley goes out of her way to be interested in anything that interests her husband. His chief interest at present is racing. Mr. Huntley owns eleven horses, who have won for him twelve races out of twenty-three.

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Photo *Bassano.*

MR. and MRS. CYRIL MAUDE

(Miss Winifred Emery).

It was one of those little unforeseen accidents that sometimes alter the course of lives that served to link the careers of those two brilliant artistes, Mr. Cyril Maude and Miss Winifred Emery.

In the flurry of a rehearsal on a semi-dark stage, Mr. Maude stumbled, and slightly tore Miss Emery's dress. Apologies served the purpose of an introduction, and the chance acquaintanceship soon developed into an engagement to marry.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Maude have always been hard workers in their profession, so much so that even their honeymoon needed to be curtailed to a single day at Eastbourne.

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

MR. and MRS. H. B. IRVING

(*Miss Dorothea Baird*).

The latest exponent of Hamlet, and the original of Trilby, Mr. H. B. Irving and Miss Dorothea Baird are an ideal married couple, who are of the greatest assistance to one another in their mutual art. Miss Baird has always had her husband's advice in the matter of her classical drapery—the Rosalind costume was made under his directions.

They first became acquainted in the Provinces, in Ben Greet's Company, which Mr. Irving joined in the early days of his career, with a view to obtaining an all-round experience.

H. B. is an author as well as an actor, and in translating "Mauricette" for the English Stage, he gave the leading part to his wife.

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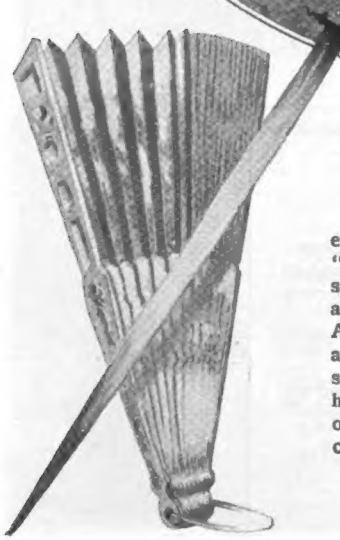
Photo *Ellis & Walery.*

MR. and MRS. TREE.

"This is the life of little me—
I am the wife of Beerbohm Tree."

These lines by Mrs. Tree are claimed to be the shortest biography ever written. Mrs. Tree met her ideal at an amateur performance of "Much Ado About Nothing." Up to that time her life had been spent in such pursuits as Greek, Trigonometry, Homer, Xenophon, and Plato, in connection with her work as teacher at Queen's College. And once she took part in a Greek play before no less a classical authority than the great Mr. Gladstone. Notwithstanding the severe scholastic bent, she has been associated with her husband in many of his successful plays, and in recognition of her merit was on one occasion presented by him with a magnificent grand piano, which she chose in lieu of a string of pearls.



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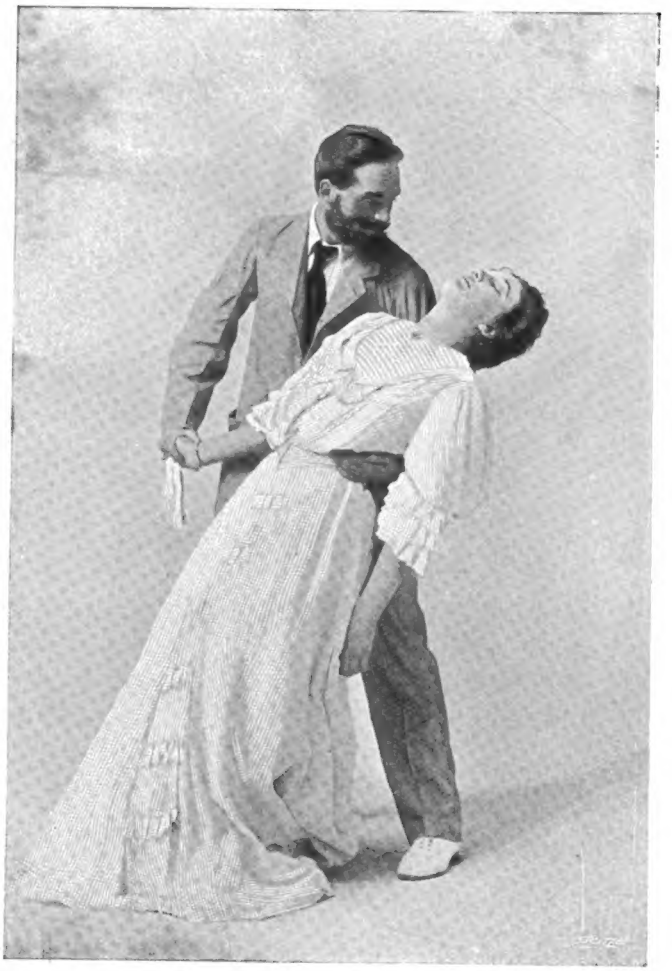

Photo *Ellis & Walery.*

MR. and MRS. GRANVILLE BARKER

(Miss Lillah McCarthy).

Born and brought up in the Cotswold Hills, though of Irish parentage, Miss Lillah McCarthy's first experience of the outside world was with one of Ben Greet's Companies. It was on this, her first tour, that she met the man who was destined to become her husband.

The second time she met him was ten years later, in London, when again they played together, at the Court Theatre.

George Bernard Shaw's plays were the principal means which led to their life partnership. They acted conjointly in "John Bull's Other Island" and in "Man And Super Man."

In the latter play John Tanner (Mr. Granville Barker) capitulated to the fascinations of Ann Whitefield (Miss McCarthy).

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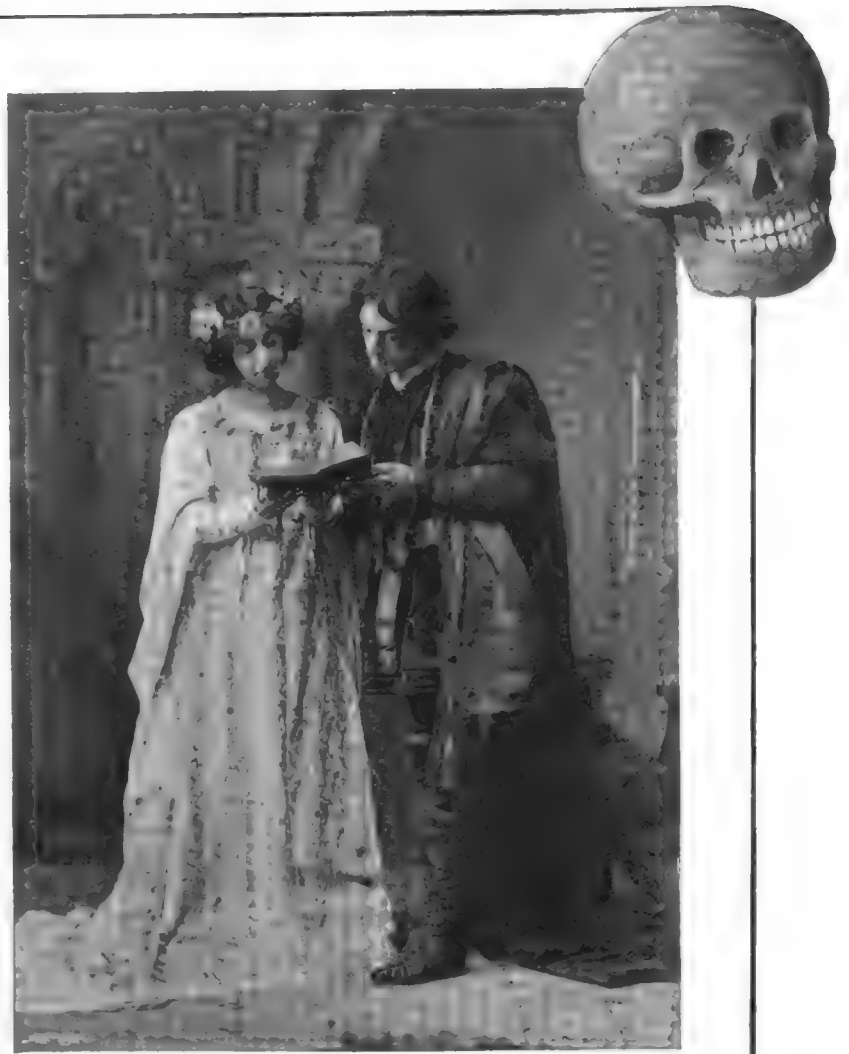

Photo *Ellis & Walery*

MR. and MRS. MARTIN HARVEY

(Miss N. de Silva).

Love came to Martin Harvey years ago in "Much Ado About Nothing," at the Old Lyceum. The part he then took was little better than a super's—that of a bronzed and moustached warrior, following in the train of Don Pedro. A certain little page in red, with feather in her cap, held the gaudy trappings of this personage in much derision. Her name was longer than her little person—Angelita Helena Margarita de Silva Ferro, and she is now Mrs. Martin Harvey!

Mrs. Martin Harvey takes leading parts in all her husband's principal plays, and it is his invariable custom to present her with a new piece of jewellery on the production of every fresh venture.

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Photo *Ellis & Walery.*

MR. and MRS. HENRY AINLEY

(Miss Suzanne Sheldon).

Mr. Henry Ainley, who has a fine part in Mr. Hall Caine's "The Bondman" at Drury Lane, was discovered by Mr. George Alexander in the provinces. He is an exceptionally handsome young man, of a type that fulfilled Mr. Alexander's requirements for a part in "Paolo and Francesca." He is of an extremely modest and retiring disposition—at all events, in regard to interviews. He takes his art very seriously indeed, and is of opinion that the personality of the artist should at all times be kept in the background.

He is married to Miss Suzanne Sheldon, an American lady, who made her first London success at the Lyceum in 1899. She appeared with her husband in "If I Were King."

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IN WAITING

A Sad Love Story that Ended Happily.

By A. M. Grange.

It is at Cawley Station that she waits, year in and year out.

The line runs close to the sea at Cawley. The station itself is neat and clean and countrified, as beseems a station where no express to or from London ever deigns to stop.

Here, at certain hours of each day, sits a feminine figure which seems to have come bodily out of the middle of the last century. A little woman of the elegant smallness which was admired in those old days. Her white hair, a strong contrast to the dark brows over-arching the large, grey, wistful eyes, is dressed in an incredibly old fashion—parted in the middle, and arranged in a knob of plaits behind, while a long curl droops on each shoulder. A pork-pie hat, tilted down over the forehead, crowns this structure; for the little lady in waiting is dressed as a girl of the 'sixties. She wears full skirts—perhaps a small crinoline lurks beneath — and sometimes a velvet jacket.

The good material and bright colouring of her frocks confirm the statement, commonly made in Cawley, that they are the very ones she wore in the 'sixties; and that owing to her endless waiting at the station, doing nothing that can injure them, they are nearly as good as new, and will last her life-time and more.

Not that she is idle. Far from it. She is perpetually knitting socks.

People who stay at Cawley, even for a few weeks in the bow-windowed lodging-houses that straggle up the valley and along the cliffs, soon come to look on Miss Grex as one of the curiosities of the place, like the cowrie shells on the beach or rare ferns in the woods, and always hear a more or less incorrect version of her life-story.

For eight-and-thirty years, the lodging-house keepers say with truth, has Miss Grex been sitting at the station.

What did happen, eight-and-thirty years ago, was this:

Mrs. Grex, the widow, lived in quiet apartments at Cawley with Beatrice, her only child. Beatrice was indeed a pretty girl in those days, when her hair was a soft, sunny gold, and her eyes had not yet begun to be wistful, and her face wore the colouring of freshest youth; such colouring as the newly-opened bud wears, or the butterfly just out of the chrysalis.

And John Ainsworth was her lover. He was not a very romantic lover, but he was a very fond one. Being twelve years older than Bee, he seemed a rather mature personage in the eyes of eighteen. His brown beard and almost rugged features contrasted unfavourably, in Bee's opinion, with the classic beauty of "Coningsby," "Fergus MacIvor," Lord Byron, and other historic or imaginary heroes on whose charms her imagination

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loved to dwell. For Bee had been brought up on poetry and romance. Mrs. Grex was not a practical woman, and yet expected Bee to be practical. When Bee turned out eminently unpractical, Mrs. Grex was annoyed.

Still, Bee certainly looked forward eagerly to John Ainsworth's companionship in time. John was her mainstay in all sorts of difficulties with which Mrs. Grex's judgment could not grapple. Bee was always looking to John, hoping in John, putting unlimited confidence in John, yet all without what the French would call *une grande passion*.

She had been pleased beyond measure when John proposed to her; and if the engagement could have been a short one, no doubt he would have carried her off, safe for life. But this was impossible, because he had to make a position. There seemed to be some sort of a struggle about the affair, and Bee was disheartened; the more so because Mrs. Grex now and then remarked—injudiciously it must be owned—that a nearly briefless barrister was no great match for such a pretty girl.

Two years passed, and John had begun to practise sufficiently to enable him to marry and keep house. He had about four hundred a year, which was plenty in those old, happy days, when income-tax was sixpence in the pound, and people had not to provide palaces and pianos for poor school children.

Under those circumstances, it was possible to live quite comfortably, and keep two maids and a boy in buttons on four hundred a-year. Bee began to buy her trousseau, but then new obstacles arose, of the nature of which every gossip in Cawley had a different account to give.

The fact was that someone made mischief, suggesting that John was not satisfactory about settlements—poor John, who had to earn every penny by hard work!—and Mrs. Grex lent an ear to the suggestion, and felt her "proper pride" to be injured; and Bee was irritated into thinking that John was slighting her, and wrote him a sharp letter, breaking off the match. He replied at once, accepting his dismissal—"it being clear now, as he had already suspected, that she never really loved him." Those were his words.

And yet she reeled under the shock of knowing that John had indeed gone out of her life. She was very silent that day. She packed up all the pretty presents she had received from John, and all the kind affectionate letters, and sent them away. Her eyes were dim with a rain of tears. Her head ached dully, but not so much as did her suffering heart.

And thus was the life-story of Bee Grex added to the world's tragedies.

A few days later, the pain in her head ceased suddenly. She came down bright and smiling to the bow-windowed parlour where Mrs. Grex sat in solitary state, grieving over the girl's broken prospects, apprehensive that people would say spiteful things, yet gloomily glad that she had shown due deference to "proper pride."

Bee skipped gaily round the room.

"What a lovely morning for going to Sandcombe to have the wedding dress fitted!"

"But you will not require it now!"—her mother spoke in vexed surprise—"and perhaps will not require it ever. You may not find another John."

"Why should I try?" Bee cried indignantly. "My own old John is good enough for me!"

Mrs. Grex stared at her, perplexed and angry. Bee's bright eyes met hers unflinchingly.

"As you have just broken off your marriage with John Ainsworth, these remarks come rather late," said Mrs. Grex drily.

"That was all a joke!" A look of misgiving darkened Bee's face, passing like a cloud. "I love poor old John, and I'm sure he loves me. Look how kind he always was! He knew we were poor, and quietly gave me all the things I wanted most: the beautiful desk, and the work-box, and the lovely little gold watch, and the——"

"All of which you returned to him on Tuesday," interposed the mother with dry scorn.

"That was only that John might take care of them—I shall find them at home after the wedding trip. I'm going over to Sandcombe this morning, while you see about those lodgings for John; and please don't forget that Fred Statham is coming with him to be his best man, and will share his rooms."

And she floated off, while Mrs. Grex sat aghast, irritably telling herself that Bee was shamming imbecility for the very purpose of vexing her.

I think that if Mrs. Grex had grasped the true state of the case, and had acted forcibly, and let John know how fond his poor little girl really was of him, and that her brain was reeling under his loss, the next down train that stopped at Cawley would have produced John; but a tragedy which she did not

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understand and could not control was being enacted before her eyes, while she looked on cross and bewildered.

Bee had all her dresses finished and sent home.

"John must be coming to-day," she said every morning. "I'll go and meet the afternoon train; he is sure to come by that."

Then Mrs. Grex read in the paper that Mr. John Ainsworth had accepted an appointment as a puisne judge in the West Indies, and was going out immediately. Bee looked startled at first; then said that it was all a joke, that John would come down and explain, and that she would go with him anywhere.

A short while after Mrs. Grex died suddenly, and Bee was left an orphan.

Sometimes when very great misfortunes befal people, minor difficulties are mercifully smoothed away, and so it was now with Beatrice. An uncle (who was to have given her away at her marriage) came down and arranged things for her; and as she was sane on all points but one, and refused to leave Cawley, it was settled that she should stay on in the lodgings, looked after by the two kind-hearted sisters who kept them, and who were pitiful towards her in her altered state. And then began the life which Beatrice Grex has led for eight-and-thirty years.

Every day thenceforward she tilted her hat, and trained the two curls over her shoulders, with the same formula to kind Miss Tapper of the lodgings: "For Mr. Ainsworth must be coming to-day, as I have not had a letter."

A succession of station-masters, all benevolently disposed towards the poor little lady, looked after her more or less; lent her rugs if the day were stormy, or even persuaded her to sit for a time by the waiting-room fire.

"But you will tell me when the train is due, won't you, Mr. Parfitt?" she would say, always in the same words. (Parfitt was the name of the station-master who had ruled in the days when John actually did come. He was dead, but she called all his successors by his name). "I expect a friend to-day, who would be *very much* disappointed not to see me on the platform," and the Sèvres china face would take a deeper pink, and a shy, half-bridling smile flicker round the sensitive lips.

She met all the down trains now; for it seemed to her that John, having been somehow prevented from coming yesterday, must travel all night to arrive earlier to-day, or, not having come in the day-time, would appear late in the evening. And the socks she knitted for John while sitting at the station grew into great piles, till at last she consented to a certain number being given away to the poor people at Christmas times. "For Mr. Ainsworth can't want them all," she would say to Miss Tapper, looking rather puzzled for a moment by the quantity produced; but always brightening up again as she thought of John's pleasure when he should take possession of his twelve dozen pairs at last.

And she floated off, while Mrs. Grex sat aghast.

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And so the years rolled on, and the world went its way. War and peace, tumult and quiet, mourning and rejoicing, followed each other duly; and a generation passed, while Bee sat by the soft blue waters of the Channel, knitting and waiting.

Thirty-eight years have lapsed thus, when, on a certain sunny afternoon of late spring, the chain of her thoughts is jarred. She is leaving the station after one of her daily disappointments, when just outside she meets a figure that comes straight out of the far past—none other than that of Fred Statham, John's college friend, who was to have been his best man at their wedding.

Fred was beardless then, and is clean-shaven now; he is a K.C., and a man of some mark in the great world. Bee recognises him in a moment, but somehow does not see the lines of age and hard work in his elderly face. She looks on him as the Fred Statham of 1868—"a nice, shy youth," as Mrs. Grex used to call him in those old days that are still new to Bee.

"How do you do, Mr. Statham?" she exclaims, holding out her little hand gloved in lemon kid. (John had always been particular about gloves.) "I wonder I did not see you leave your train! I have met all the down trains for—for some days past—because, of course, I am expecting John."

"I came by an up train from Plymouth," says the astonished man, standing in some embarrassment, with the lemon-coloured hand in his own big paw, and wondering who on earth the little, eccentric, china shepherdess and her John might be.

"I have been travelling in America with my eldest son——" he continues, but she has already cut him short.

"*Of course*, John is following you down. He must have much to arrange in town. We have taken rooms for you and him together. It is so good of you, Mr. Statham—or let me call you Fred, as John does!—so nice of you, Fred, to come to our wedding! Mamma and I quite appreciate the kindness." For a moment the puzzled look clouds her brow, and like a cloud it passes. She clings to his hand hard, as though her darkened intellect instinctively knew in him a link with vanished hope and joy.

And now the past begins to unroll itself in the mind of Statham, K.C.—that past which had been so full for himself and for his friend Ainsworth, so empty and lonely for poor Bee. He recognises her youthful beauty, frostily preserved, like a flower in ice; he remembers Ainsworth's first engagement, and grim despair when the fateful letter came; he realises the fact that this is Bee Grex, with whom he and all John's friends were so angry nearly forty years ago.

But those long years have taught Fred Statham how to think mercifully, and he is very kind to Bee. He goes home with her to the lodgings, where she exhibits him with much pride to the Miss Tappers as "Mr. Frederick Statham, Mr. Ainsworth's great friend, who has just come down to Cawley to be his best man"; and orders an old-fashioned high tea, such as Statham had once partaken of in those far-off times, in this same bow-windowed room.

After tea, he contrives to snatch a private interview with the elder Miss Tapper, from whom he learns all the particulars of Bee's history. The kind old landlady drops a tear as she shows him the twelve dozen pairs of socks; and perhaps there is a drop of moisture in the K.C.'s own shrewd, grey eyes.

* * * * *

When Sir John Ainsworth first came home from the Colonies, he took a house on Campden Hill; and now, though for several years he has been a widower, he keeps it on as a rendezvous for his married sons and daughters, and a museum for his many curiosities.

He is alone in his oak-panelled study, softly lighted by antique lamps, when his old friend Statham comes to see him after a long absence abroad.

For a while, as the two old lawyers sit in their two arm-chairs, Statham talks of nothing but America. Then, after a thoughtful pause, he says:

"I landed at Plymouth, and stopped for a day at Cawley. You remember Cawley, John?"

"Certainly."

John looks up with something like a start.

"What did you there?" he asks at last.

"I went to see my cousin, who is staying at the hotel; but I saw someone else as well. Someone whom you used to know—Miss Grex."

"Beatrice Grex?"

"Beatrice Grex herself. Wearing the old costume of the 'sixties, John! and with curls on her shoulders still, only they are grey curls now."

"You spoke to her?"

"Yes. She recognised me first, and then I remembered her pink and white face. She seems as sound as a bell—except on one point."

"And what is that?"

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"You." Statham is silent for a few seconds. "Poor little soul! It seems that her mind received a shock when the match was broken off—that she really loved you more than you knew—or she knew. I went home with her to the old bow-windowed house—you remember—and the landladies, kind old souls, told me everything. Miss Grex thinks we are still in the year 1868, and that you are perpetually coming down by the next train to marry her. When she saw me, she was radiant with joy. She seemed quite unconscious of my crows'-feet and general old-fogiedom, and greeted me as your best man, just arrived for the wedding."

"Good Heavens, Statham! Bee Grex!"

John rises and stands looking down at the fire, while the old sea-shore, the old lanes, the old time with its salt breezes, its summer fragrance, its crisp winter mornings, and the fresh beauty of the Devonshire lass, live for him once again.

"All alone in the world, Fred?"

"Her mother has long been dead, but the two old women of the lodgings—you must remember them almost girls—are very good to her. They showed me the heap of socks she has knitted for you. She sits at the station, every day and nearly all day, waiting for the train that is to bring you down."

Sir John utters an exclamation. Then for a while he talks of other things. But when Statham is about to leave him, he recurs to the subject of Bee.

"I am thinking of what you told me about Bee Grex. You really mean to say, Fred, that for eight-and-thirty years, while you and I worked out our careers, and achieved some success, and married and saw our children grow up, she has been sitting alone at Cawley Station, waiting for me?"

"Yes. And she is waiting there still."

"By Heaven, Fred!" John wrings his friend's hand hard. "I am glad you told me! I am glad to know! For she shall wait no longer!"

* * * * *

It is a brilliant spring morning, blue and sparkling as a Devon morning alone can be. The meads are abloom with daisies, and the gardens are bowers of lilac and laburnum. White sails dot the pearly sea. The downs are fragrant with thyme.

Bee's heart swells with hope. Always, at this time of the year, it has done so. She dresses herself in her best—the blue-and-white silk, which, after the carefully hoarded wedding dress itself, is her most beautiful garment. Over it she puts on a worked white muslin jacket. Her hair is tucked into a blue chenille net, all except the two curls straying on her muslin shoulders; and the pork-pie hat crowns the whole. It is only on very fine days, when she is in her brightest spirits, that she dons this attire.

She sits in her accustomed fine-weather place, a seat just outside the east end of the station, whence she can see the long stretch of sea-wall along which the slow trains crawl.

She sees the engine appear round the corner, and slow down as it approaches. Alas! how many thousand times has she not watched this same sight, with this same half-wistful, half-hopeful look, as though at the back of her mind lurked an idea that John really *was* rather long in coming! But she is sure to-day. She follows her usual routine; puts her knitting away in a little basket, and moves close to the entrance where the ticket-porter stands, that she may scan everyone who passes out.

A carriage door nearly opposite swings open, and John Ainsworth steps out and crosses the platform.

Bee utters a low cry of joy. Ah! perhaps at that moment of long-deferred hope fulfilled something of the truth is revealed to her, and either the sight of his grey head and worn old face, or the clear-mindedness that comes with happiness intense, shows her in grey perspective the long, long waste of years which she has spent in waiting for this hour. For she says, as she springs to meet him:

"John! At last!"

"Here I am, Beatrice!"

It is his old, kind, tender voice!

He cares not for the people around them—some only travellers, thinking about their luggage and belongings; but some, as the station-master and porters, all agog at the sight of Miss Grex really meeting a friend at last. He only looks at the well-remembered pink and white face, and the costume which seems so comically antiquated in the twentieth century, but which yet appeals to him most pathetically as marking the time when the clock of her reason stopped. His heart swells with a great pity for the love of his youth. Gently he takes both her hands and draws her towards him. She gazes up into his face.

"John! At last! Thank God!" She repeats the words two or three times; and while she looks at him in wonder, her features change; the glassy light of partial insanity dies out of her eyes; the scales fall, and her spirit is no longer blind. For this moment of fulfilled desire is as a tree of life, and she

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sees John as he is, elderly and grey, and worn with the burthen and heat of his long day: and she glances from his face down to her own muslin shoulders, where the curls that once were golden lie silvery white. She speaks again in scared tones, yet in the fresh voice of her girlhood:

"Oh, John! It must be a long time since we met! We seem to be quite old and grey, and I thought we were young. I thought it was only a few days ago that you wrote—that you wrote me a letter—of course a sort of joke——"

She paused, as wonderment and emotion choked her voice.

"It was a letter written all too hastily, Bee," he answered with utmost gentleness, leading her to the far end of the platform, where the soft sea-breeze blew on their faces. "Time has passed, but has brought us to this day, when the rough places are made plain, please God. Dear old Cawley is beautiful still;" and he lifted his hat and looked out on the sea, to give a rest to her bewildered puzzlement.

"Yes. I've been at Cawley ever since that letter came! And now you have returned—really returned, John? And forgiven me? For I know I was foolish and unkind."

"It must be mutual forgiveness, Bee. And do you think"—he smiled as he strove to quiet his own labouring heart—"that those good Miss Tappers will give me a cup of tea in the old bow-windowed room?"

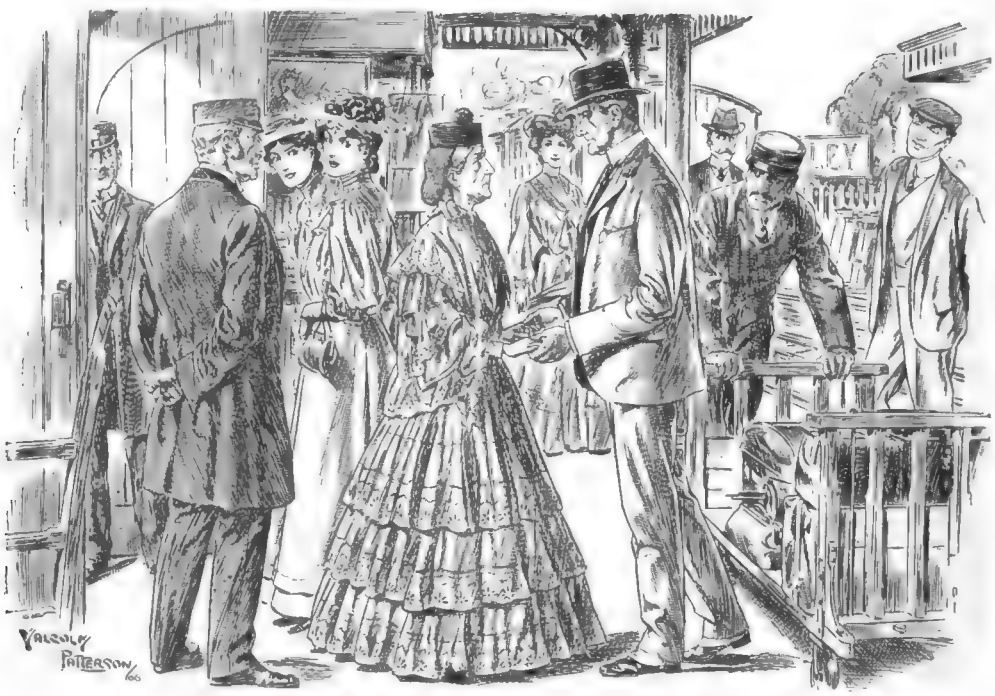
What a triumphal walk that was, arm-in-arm with John up the village street, although she was softly crying all the way! Even the tingle of returning reason, together with a new womanly consciousness that the dress of the ladies whom she met, and the things in the shop windows, were very unlike her own attire, could not harass Bee in her new glory, her deep, speechless thanksgiving.

The Tapper sisters, from their own window, saw the pair advancing, and flew downstairs with cries of joy. In the doorway Bee paused, gazing at their old faces out of her own almost intact beauty, alight again now with something of its girlish sparkle and charm.

"Dear Ellen!—dear Annie! Will you please bring tea as soon as possible? For Mr. Ainsworth has come; though he has been away a *long* time, a far longer time than I realised; he came by the last train—the last train from town."

Sir John Ainsworth grasped the hands of the two good women.

"I thank you!" he cried; "I thank you both a thousand times, solemnly and from my heart, for your kindness; for the care which you have taken of the lady who in a very short time will be my wife."



"We seem to be quite old and grey, and I thought we were young."

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Captain Von Herbert.

SURVIVORS' TALES OF GREAT EVENTS

No. XXIII.—THE FIGHT FOR PLEVNA.

FROM THE NARRATIVE OF CAPTAIN F. W. VON HERBERT.

AS TOLD TO WALTER WOOD.

The greatest act of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 was the fight for Plevna, an obscure little Bulgarian market-town—one of the bloodiest combats in history. Plevna was held by the Turks, and three times within eight weeks the allied Russian-Roumanian armies tried to take it by storm. They failed, with enormous losses. At last the defenders, starving and disease-stricken, made a sortie as a forlorn hope. This collapsed, and the Turks were forced to surrender. The defence of Plevna lasted 143 days and included four desperate battles, twenty-five lesser engagements, and many skirmishes, and cost nearly 100,000 men in killed and wounded and deaths from disease. Captain F. W. von Herbert, who so vividly tells this awful story, served throughout the siege, as a mere boy of an officer, with the Turks. Since then he has travelled and written extensively, and as a British infantry officer he went through the whole of the South African War. His life has been full of adventure and romance. There is the authority of Lord Kitchener for stating that there are only about half-a-dozen survivors on the Turkish side of this memorable campaign. One is Edhem Pasha, the present Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish Army, who was Captain von Herbert's General of Brigade in 1877; Captain von Herbert; Colonel Dr. Ryan, an English surgeon in the Turkish Army, now living in Melbourne, as Principal Medical Officer to the Australian Forces; an aged tradesman of Adrianople; and two brothers who are now in the Egyptian Army and hold warrant rank. It seems strange that only six men, after but three decades, should be alive out of an army which counted, all told, 48,000; but it is a historically proved fact that only 8000 of these returned to their homes after the war, and of these 8000 the majority were already middle-aged reservists.

"IN the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate!"

Nearly thirty years have passed since I heard that noble soldier Osman Pasha bid his striving heroes God-speed on the way to the "Green Hills" south of Plevna. "That is your way!" he shouted. "Go on, in the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate!" I waved my sword and added my voice to the shouts with which our valiant chief's encouragement was greeted, and dashed anew into the third of the bloody fights which were fought before Plevna fell. Never had troops a finer leader than this soldier of the Crescent; never had a leader braver followers than the so-called infidels who gave their lives as willingly as ever Christians did on the field of battle.

I was a lad of seventeen when, one fine morning in February, 1877, I offered my services to the Sultan of Turkey for the war with Russia, which was then certain. After much running to and fro in Constantinople, I enlisted in the Turkish Army as a private soldier. That was a mere formality, because my education was immeasurably superior to that of 999 per thousand of my comrades, and, after passing swiftly through the grades of corporal and sergeant, I competed at one of the military colleges in the capital for a commission.

I passed the examination with flying colours, and a month after my enlistment I was a second-lieutenant in the army of His Majesty the Sultan. I had been an officer only half-a-day when I was on my way to Widdin Camp in command of a detachment of 180 men. I was ordered to join the redoubtable Osman Pasha. He is one of the world's immortal heroes, and his name is inseparably associated with Plevna. Even then he was famous as a great soldier, for in the previous year he had proved the victor in the war against Servia. I reached the camp a day before hostilities with Russia and Roumania actually began, and I

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remember that I was flushed with pride, because although my crossing of the Balkans was difficult and dangerous—there was no railway then—my only casualties were a horse and cart.

For many weeks we suffered the miseries of uncertainty and inactivity; then came the abrupt order to strike camp and march to Plevna. We obeyed with wild enthusiasm and began and finished what proved to be one of the most famous marches in history—one of a hundred and fifteen miles in six days, despite enormous difficulties.

It was a thrilling and desperate race between two armies for possession of an obscure town of vast strategic importance. We strove our hardest, and the Russians did the same, they marching from the North, we from the West. We won the race by a few hours, and just as a disappointed and furious combatant who has been defeated in a contest and has lost the prize might seek to wrest it from the winner, so the Russians strove to snatch our trophy from us. They fell upon us at the dawn of the day which followed my arrival in the town, and the result was the first of four great sanguinary battles.

We had reached our goal after a record march through an almost waterless country, in the hot summer of the East, and I was thankful to go to my crowded quarters on the outskirts of the town, and try to get some sleep. You must bear in mind that we were unaware of the close proximity of the enemy. We had seen no sign of him, and beyond a distant boom of guns we had no idea of his presence. But we were swiftly to learn how near he was and what a resolute and stubborn foe we had to fight.

I was startled from my sleep at daybreak on July 20 by the drums beating the "alarm" in the streets, and all the excitement and confusion of assembling troops for battle. I rushed out, half-dressed, and collected my squad of fifty men, all still dead beat, and very soon we were on the march with our battalion to a ravine about three miles to the north-east of Plevna. Though we were ignorant yet our commanders knew their business. And I think we also did our duty, because even then, at the very outbreak of the war, we were called upon to do work which is hard of accomplishment for the most seasoned troops—and that was to remain inactive and keep our presence from the knowledge of the enemy. We lay, motionless and silent, not daring to move or make a sound, on the slope of a ravine which had been a river bed.

After some hours of the severest strain I learnt what our object was—that we were to lie in wait for some unsuspecting Russians, who were advancing towards us, and at the given order, rise and scatter them. We were so much inferior in numbers that the idea was to take the advancing Russians by surprise, and demoralise them and turn them back; then we were to rush off to some other spot to help. This was done, hence the abandonment of the ravine later. In this way many Turkish detachments were utilised two or three times over.

What were my sensations then, you ask? How did I feel? What thoughts flashed through my brain? Well, I was very young, and I have no clear recollection of many things; but I do remember that my heart was beating high at the prospect of a baptism by fire. And how my imagination ran riot! I saw the Russians, sure enough, and many of them, but to my excited gaze there appeared to be nothing else but Russians in the world. I saw nothing but huge black masses of them crowding towards us across the hills and standing out against the horizon, looking for all the world like immense hordes of insects creeping slowly over the green fields to devour us. It was inexpressibly awesome to watch them coming, and to know what they were advancing to meet, because it was clear that they had no suspicion of our near presence in the ravine and that they were marching towards an unseen deathtrap.

I saw them as they came closer and closer; I noticed the thin, blue smoke which rose skyward from amongst them and showed that they were smoking. Later I could see their faces, many of which were bright with the laughter that now reached my ears. They were joyous soldiers on the march and keeping first-rate order in their ranks. They came on and on, and I know of nothing more terrible in my long, adventurous career than that unconscious march to their doom of the brave Russian soldiers.

Suddenly, as if scenting the still undiscovered trap, the oncoming battalions sent out skirmishers towards the spot where we were hidden; but the move was too late. Already the enemy was within reach of the rifles which, so far, had not made so much as a crack on the still air.

A wild, shrill sound was heard—to this day I do not know who made it—the notes of a whistle which was blown by someone in authority amongst us; then the bugle sounded "**Fire**," and the Turks let loose a perfectly hellish fusillade upon the enemy.

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The skirmishers staggered, then, recovering from their amazement, retreated hastily upon their main body. But the check was only for the moment. The Russians pulled themselves together with surprising swiftness, and returned a fiercer fire than our own.

Then they charged upon us with all the valour for which Russian infantry is justly famed. They were overwhelmingly superior to us on this spot—three battalions to about three companies—and it was clear that we stood no chance of success against them. As I saw them rushing upon us and heard their shouts and the hiss of their bullets, I will confess that my courage vanished utterly. For the moment I was physically overcome with the terrors of a first battle, especially when a bullet whizzed past my ear, almost touching it, with a swift hum like a blue-bottle. But I recovered almost as quickly as I had been seized, and never again in action, from that moment, did I feel disturbed or concerned.

I did my duty like the boy I was. I ran about the line, exhorting my brave Turks to do their duty, and they answered after the fashion of their kind, and did it; and when I uttered much ungrammatical and unmilitary nonsense in the shape of orders, they understood the spirit of my words, and made allowance for youth and inexperience. We had to retire, and went to a village across the hills two miles to the north of Plevna. We ousted a small body of Russians from it, at little cost to ourselves; and the next thing I remember was that I saw the whole of the enemy, about three miles away, in what seemed to be a disorderly retreat. They were going back exactly the way they had come. I did not know then that our own withdrawal from the ravine was pre-arranged.

That, so far as I was concerned, was the end of the first battle of Plevna. A ten days' interval of what to the outside world seemed quietness followed; but it was to us a period of the most intense excitement and activity, because during that time we built the famous lines of Plevna, which have been accepted as the perfect model of a modern fortress.

I and a young friend called Seymour, born in Turkey of an English father and a Turkish mother, and, like myself, a second-lieutenant, were very busily employed, but not so zealously that we could not find time for fun with the Turkish girls—those who were not yet old enough for the harem and who in any case had unusual freedom because of the war.

One day, in digging, I slipped, and my hand was impaled on a spade. The wound was so bad that I was sent to hospital—my first of many such experiences, for disease has made a patient of me many times. I was in a little native house which later became famous as a hospital for desperate cases, and as I was not so seriously hurt as to be laid up, I had an easy time. It was romantic, too, because I made love to the surgeon's, and householder's, daughter, a girl of fifteen named Djémilé. In ordinary circumstances you may live in Turkey for a century and never see a Turkish woman; but war makes a difference, and in those days we saw a good deal of them. This was the first love of my life, and was destined to end in a tragedy which has left an indelible mark upon my memory. But of that I will tell you later.

I returned to duty in time for the second Russian attack, which is known as the second battle of Plevna (July 30th), and ended in one of the most dismal defeats which the Russians have ever suffered, and in one of the most glorious victories of the once unconquered Crescent. The enemy outnumbered us by three to one in men, and five to one in guns, and the action was almost a repetition of the first, except that now we were not concealed, for the Russians could see our brand-new fortifications. The fight was as creditable to the assailants as it was to the defenders.

Columns, not lines, are needed to tell you all that passed on this occasion, so I will not do more than describe one outstanding incident. That was the wonderful charge of the famous Regiment Pensa, which won fresh glory in the recent war with Japan. This regiment hurled itself with almost incredible fury against the newly-constructed works, in which my own battalion lay well under cover. We allowed them to come within 500 yards, and I can testify, from my own long, personal experience of war, that there is absolutely nothing in the world so difficult as to withhold one's fire in such circumstances. My own revolver would not carry more than sixty yards, yet it was the hardest of hard things not to let fly with all the six chambers long before the Russians came within my range. How much harder, then, for the men, knowing, as they did, that their rifles would mow the enemy down at much more than the distance named? But not a man fired until the signal was given.

This time it was a cannon-shot and not a whistle. There was the crash of the guns at point-blank range and the hell of rifle-fire,

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and the shattered ranks of the noble regiment fell back. Twenty minutes later they rushed upon us afresh, and this time actually got as far as our redoubt and swarmed up the slope —four to one against us.

Terrible was the struggle, hideous the carnage. We battered in their heads and hurled them down, and cast them off with anything that came to hand—rifle-butts, axes, spades, and engineers' tools of all sorts. Not until the survivors saw that the attempt to win the redoubt was hopeless did they withdraw. Then the pitiful remnant pulled itself together and withdrew in sullen anger.

The Regiment Pensa went into action 2000 strong; in that great struggle it lost 1700 in slain and wounded, and without a single exception every officer was killed. My own battalion, too, had suffered terribly, so much so that for some weeks I was the commander of my company, instead of being a junior. At the present day there is on this spot a monument—one of three hundred near the sleepy little town—which says:

Sacred to the memory of the Regiment
Pensa, which lies buried here.

We waited while the battle raged in other quarters, then, towards evening, we reinforced another portion of the line of defence, all chances of a fresh attack in our direction having vanished. But before the battle ended I was to see an extraordinary thing—the collision between two charging lines of infantry, both on the move.

Again it was hell let loose, and for some time I did not know what happened; but when all was over, and I was clear of the enemy, I noticed that my sword was dripping with blood, and that the six chambers of my revolver had been discharged. How it had all come to pass I cannot tell you, because I had not then, and have not now, the slightest recollection. I had become very faint, and felt a horrible sensation of wet heat on my chest. I found that I was bleeding from a wound on my face, and later on, but not for two or three days, I recollected that I had been in conflict with a Russian giant of an officer, mounted on a giant of a horse. He rushed upon me, and small chance I should have had of escape from his furious slash if I had not parried with my sword. I should have been cut in two.

I swooned on the field of battle, and was carried to hospital. When I came round I found that I was again in my old quarters, and that my nurse was my friend Djémilé. Once more I pulled round quickly, and rejoined my battalion in time to take part in the sanguinary third battle of Plevna, which ranks as one of the most desperate fights in modern warfare.

This battle, fought on September 11-12, was ushered in by a four days' bombardment so heavy and continuous that the Russians fired 30,000 shells; yet the effect of this was practically nothing. By this time Osman's forces numbered 30,000, with 72 guns, while the Russian-Roumanian army made a total of 95,000, with 444 guns. From a neighbouring hill the Tsar and a brilliant company watched the fight—the Tsar having invited them to see the downfall of the Turks, of which he now felt certain.

The fine weather had been succeeded by wet and cold and fog that intensified our miseries. The battle itself was fought in heavy and ceaseless rain.

The Russians planned a three-pointed attack, and throughout that fateful day everything that valour could accomplish was attempted. Time after time they advanced to the assault, grey regiments in a grey atmosphere; time after time the brave Turks hurled them back, and the proud Emperor who had commanded the attendance of spectators to witness a triumph, had the bitterness of successive defeats to bear. He had promised a stupendous victory, and he was forced to see a disastrous reverse, although his army was so overwhelmingly superior to our own!

Of this battle an incident is ever present to me—sometimes even now in my dreams. In the tumult of a fight I was trying to collect my scattered men, and had just ordered my company's bugler to sound the "Assembly," when, quite close to my ear, I heard the most awe-inspiring notes that can strike a soldier on the field of battle — the bugle-call: "Prepare for cavalry!"

There was a thunderous roar, a shaking of the earth, a swift appearance from the folds of clammy fog of a regiment of Cossacks charging upon us, the men scarcely visible as they rode so strangely behind their horses' heads, but with their terrible 18-ft. long lances bristling before them like gigantic insect stings.

It was an appalling moment, but I had got my men close together, rallied upon our Colours, and whether the Cossacks had had enough or did not like the look of us, I do not know; but they rode away without doing us much harm, and that was the last of the fight that day.

I spent the night on the field of battle—a night so unutterable in its sufferings and

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We battered in their heads and hurled them down, and cast them off with anything that came to hand—rifle-butts, axes, spades, and engineers' tools of all sorts.

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Over the two miles of gently rising ground we advanced—

horrors, that I cannot even attempt to picture it to you. Drenched by ceaseless rain, with no food, no drink, no comforts, no medicines, no help of any sort for the dying and suffering, with the red light of burning haystacks and barns showing the redder slush of the battle-field; exhausted, lying in a sodden trench which was literally a stream of human blood, how could I rest or sleep?

And above all other sounds arose that prayer to God, the merciful, the compassionate, from the stoical Turks, to end their agonies by death.

Next day the fight was renewed and finished, and what was meant to be a colossal defeat for us became one of the most glorious victories ever gained by the Crescent.

This proved to be the greatest battle of the war, this two-days' fight in which the dead were so numerous that the Russians literally built parapets of the corpses and wounded men. This I saw with my own eyes—walls of human flesh and blood, instead of earth and stone. The battle lasted twenty-eight hours, and cost the Russians, according to their own accounts, nearly 19,000 dead and wounded, but according to more reliable estimates, 26,000; while the Turkish loss was 5000—losses so enormous that thousands of the dead remained unburied, and were devoured by carrion birds and dogs. These casualties were greater than the whole of the British losses throughout the South African war.

Can you wonder that the Russians, thrice defeated with enormous losses, abandoned hope of winning Plevna? But success was to be theirs at last, for that which fire and sword could not achieve was to be effected by starvation. Three months' incredible

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—then we got amongst the crashing guns themselves and suffered awful losses.

privations were to be endured by us who were now besieged in Plevna, where winter added to the sufferings of men and women and children, and where life was of so little value that a dead human being excited no more comment than a rat's carcase—not so much, indeed, for the rat was at least an article of diet. Bread was priceless; coffee fetched half-a-sovereign a cup, and body and soul were kept together by eating refuse that the very scavenger-dogs refused to touch.

It was a choice between surrender and a forlorn sortie, in the hope that we might escape by cutting through the Russian lines, of 220,000 men who formed a thirty miles' circle round us. Our unconquerable commander, after consultation, resolved upon the latter, and our final preparations were made for that last effort, which has been justly called the suicide of an army. Most solemn of all our acts was the burning of our standards, to save them from the Russians. Of fuel there was almost none, yet we spared a little wood to make the fire into which, with heavy hearts, and still in the name of God, we threw our tattered banners, and watched them burn to ashes which were scattered to the winter winds.

On the night of December 9, my battalion evacuated the redoubt which had been my dwelling-place and fighting-place for four and a-half months, leaving behind dummies dressed as soldiers, so that the enemy should be deceived to the very last. I had had my turn, too, in that inferno, the fever hospital, and once more had been nursed by my gentle friend Djémilé. To her I had bidden farewell, and sorrowfully I said good-bye to Plevna as I marched away and tramped through the bitterly cold slush. Only the fit

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could leave. The wounded and the sick and dying, with some of the women and children, remained in Plevna to take their chances, and poor indeed they proved to be. The danger to the Turkish women and children came from the Bulgarians of Plevna—the town had a dual population—and began as soon as the orderly and law-abiding Turkish troops were withdrawn. When the Russians entered the town the danger was over. The critical time for the women and children was thus the fourteen or sixteen hours between the Turkish abandonment and the Russian occupation. Most of the women accompanied us in carts. One of my last acts had been to paste notices on buildings, headed by a great black cross, and stating that only wounded were inside. My very paste-pot was snatched from my hands and the contents eaten by starving fellow-creatures.

It was midnight when I left the town, one of the last handful of soldiers to go, and with some comrades I passed a wretched night in a deserted boathouse on the bank of the river-bed. When morning came the snow had ceased falling, but it was through a sullen atmosphere that, drawn up in battle array, we looked towards the Russian lines which we must storm and break before we could gain our freedom. It was a forlorn hope, yet even then, with certain death awaiting most of us, only one cry was heard—"No surrender"—that and the ceaseless prayers to God, the merciful, the compassionate.

What followed is admittedly the greatest bayonet charge ever made by a modern army. Twenty-nine battalions of Turkish infantry, making a steel-capped line two miles in length, charged simultaneously. My own battalion was on the extreme right of this wonderful array. It was a solemn moment when we started through the slush, under the gloomy, leaden heavens, knowing that success was impossible, supported only by the knowledge that the honour of the flag demanded this supreme sacrifice. It was worth while to have lived and suffered, to see that dismal yet glorious winter morning's display of valour and patriotism, to hear the great shouts of "No surrender," and the prayer, "In the name of God, the merciful!" which rose to the snow-laden sky as our troops were set in motion. With these as our battle-cries we marched towards and rushed upon the deadly Russian batteries.

Nothing in warfare, I think, has surpassed this incident in solemn grandeur and dramatic power. The official countersign for the day was "*Bismillah Rahmin Rahamin*," which means in English: "In the name of God who has had mercy and will have mercy"—the opening words of the Koran and a stereotyped phrase in Moslem ritual. The phrase was intoned by the whole of the army as it advanced to the attack, in time to the footsteps.

This was undoubtedly the most impressive thing I have ever witnessed. The melody used was one of those employed by the priests when intoning the prayer, which the men, in spare moments, had arranged in four parts.

Over the two miles of gently rising ground we advanced, then we got amongst the crashing guns themselves and suffered awful losses.

The dead lay thick upon that vast battlefield. Seymour, my brave comrade, who had survived till now, was slain at my side; and my other personal friend fell at my feet, to rise no more. But in spite of all our losses we kept on our mad, forlorn enterprise, until even the fatalistic Turk recognised that he must choose between surrender and annihilation.

Our great chief had been wounded and taken to a peasant's house, and there, as he lay in torture, he was besieged by messengers from every part of our army, all with the same story—that the day was lost, and that there was not the slightest hope.

I was present and saw him, for I had been dispatched with an urgent summons for the help which it was impossible for him to give. Even then Osman's spirit was not broken, but at last he bowed to the inevitable, and, heavy-hearted, gave the order to surrender. A white flag fluttered on the roof. Then, and not till then, did Plevna really fall. Nearly 8000 dead and wounded was the toll of war for that day's awful work.

At eventide on that short, gloomy winter's day I surrendered myself and the sad remains of my battalion to a courteous and sympathetic Roumanian colonel. I was the only officer of my battalion left, and as for my company, it mustered only forty when the roll was called.

I was heart-broken. The great, long fight for Plevna was over, and we were vanquished; my dearest friends had fallen, and I had just seen the drawn features of our suffering and beloved chief, in itself a heavy sorrow.

But, most terrible of all, in rejoining my men I had seen a mutilated corpse which had rolled out of a cart. One shuddering glance showed me that a shell splinter had slain my friend and nurse, Djémilé.

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Real Life Romances.

Readers are Requested to Submit Accounts of Strange Happenings They have Experienced or Heard of. All Incidents Must be True, and Fully Substantiated.

A Lion-Hunting Romance.

AN INCIDENT OF THE BOER WAR.

IT was a newly-arrived detachment on its way to the front and passing through a famous big game district.

One, Captain Macdonald, of the Yeomanry, and his subaltern, Chalmers, arranged to seize the opportunity and try for a lion. There were plenty in the neighbourhood. At night they could be heard growling in the forest round the camps, while more than one youthful sentry, on a lonely post by the railway track or guarding the water supply, had come hurriedly into the guard with white face and uncertain step, pattering some tale of a vague shape stealing on him from the darkness of the jungle.

In tense excitement the watchers sat rigid as statues.

A few of the more simple still lay awake, listening fearsomely for the traditional roaring connected in the vulgar mind with the monarch of beasts—a fiction not discouraged by more experienced and hoax-loving comrades.

The plan of campaign fixed upon by the gallant captain and his subordinate was to perch on the roof of a thatched shed near a known haunt of the beasts and lie in wait with a tethered kid as bait. Everything was prepared accordingly, and a more or less comfortable seat arranged on the roof of the shed.

One evening, the short twilight of these latitudes changing swiftly into the deeper shades that herald the darkness, found the two adventurers ensconced in their *cachette,* the kid moving uneasily in the limits of its tether and all the sounds of the day giving place to the suspicious movements of night. Macdonald was provided with a double Express rifle, while his companion had a combination shot and ball gun, a ball cartridge from which at close range has as much smashing power as can be desired.

The darkness grew, a few whispered remarks alone broke the silence on the roof, but strange, eerie noises came to the watchers out of the forest, a cracking twig as some animal moved softly by, or a rustling of undergrowth where a nocturnal wanderer passed on its way foraging.

Hoarse croaks came occasionally from the neighbouring creek, otherwise silence fell deeper as the minutes sped. In the warm, tropical night air their watch was far from unpleasant, nothing of moment happening to disturb its monotony.

At length Macdonald knocked his chin with a jerk against his knee and started guiltily. He looked round. Chalmers had not noticed, in fact, he appeared to be almost oblivious of his surroundings. Macdonald felt that this was an occasion for enhancing his dignity, and shamelessly forgetful of his own lapse from full consciousness, dug his comrade in the ribs and told him not to go to sleep.

"All right, old chap," said Chalmers sleepily; "but it seems to me rather a poor game so far. Suppose we take alternate watches; you take an hour first as senior, and then wake me up. I feel like a dormouse as it is."

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This seemed a sensible suggestion, so matters were arranged accordingly. Chalmers, relieved from the necessity of keeping up appearances, openly slumbered, while his comrade continued to search the now almost profound darkness for moving shapes, and endeavoured to keep his eyes up to their work.

A growing feeling of irritation at Chalmers' disgusting want of keenness made the hour seem interminable and, when at last his turn came, it was with no slight satisfaction that he dug his comrade in the ribs for the second time. A sleepy grunt was the only direct response, but stronger measures proving effective, the positions were shortly afterwards reversed.

Chalmers, in his turn, was beginning to think lion-shooting an inferior pastime as he sat with strained attention. It was impossible to see anything more than a few yards away, but gentle rustlings sounded at times, frogs occasionally croaked, and once a cry rose in the far distance, as of an animal caught in a snare. Perhaps the object of their hopes had found another supper.

Overhead, through gaps in the luxuriant foliage, dark clouds moving heavily across the sky were just distinguishable. There was a peculiar feeling in the air, calling to mind the approach of a thunderstorm in England. What if it should begin to rain? He examined his watch by the light of a small electric torch (a present from his people in the old country), and learnt that another hour was gone. At that moment, as he turned to arouse Macdonald, a spot of rain fell on his hand, then another followed, and by the time his friend was awake a regular tropical shower had begun.

When it starts to come down out there, it does the thing thoroughly, no half and half measures, and the unfortunate couple, unprepared for such a visitation, were very soon soaked to the skin. Their ardour was perceptibly cooled from the by no means feverish height it had arrived at before the downpour; but fortunately their very violence soon wears out these showers and, with the cessation of the rain, a pallid moon sent some feeble rays struggling through the overhanging canopy of leaves.

There was still a persistent and annoying drip from the trees, but the sportsmen were now wide awake, and no longer open to the seductions of Morpheus.

The poor little bait, disturbed by its nocturnal bath, was just visible in the light of the moonbeams as it moved feebly round, giving utterance, every now and again, to a plaintive bleat.

Still nothing came, and the hours wore on to that mysterious period which precedes the dawn. In the mild air their wetting was not a terrible inconvenience, and there was still a possibility of patience meeting with its just reward. Darkness still covered the land, and all sounds were hushed. The two comrades waited, conscious that their long vigil moved rapidly to an inevitable close, when dawn should bring them relief, and then, suddenly, came a distinct and unmistakable movement from the jungle. Nothing was to be seen, a hand held before the face was barely visible. In tense excitement the watchers sat rigid as statues with guns grasped in readiness. A final bleat, as of terror, came from the tethered kid, the strange rustling drew nearer; there was no question about it, some animal approached the spot. Now could be heard a struggling motion, as if the bait were endeavouring to evade an attack. Still darkness enveloped the scene, and it was impossible to fire even were the long-expected lion there in person.

But dawn comes suddenly in these regions, and now, at the crucial moment, the faintest gleam of light crept over the horizon and through the vegetation. Gradually vague outlines formed themselves out of the blackness.

A moving body was advancing on the kid. Almost simultaneously the two sportsmen raised their weapons and fired together. A flash, a deafening report in the confined space of the small glade, then silence fell again.

With the momentarily increasing light the two men could see that the victim of their discharge lay motionless on the ground within a few feet of the bait—whose innocent life incidentally must have been saved by their timely fire.

With beating hearts they climbed down from their post, stiff but triumphant, to view the victim of their prowess. The corpse seemed small for a lion—perhaps it was a leopard after all. Still that would be something to show when they returned to camp.

Then a fearful and terrible vision developed itself before their eyes. The truth stared them in the face; a full grown nanny goat lay dead before them.

Let us draw a veil over the horror of this discovery, the language, the hurriedly excavated grave. Enough that the scene being laid near the home of the bait, its mother had broken fastenings to follow her offspring into the jungle. Thus yet another mother had died for her young one.

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A Reptile Romance.

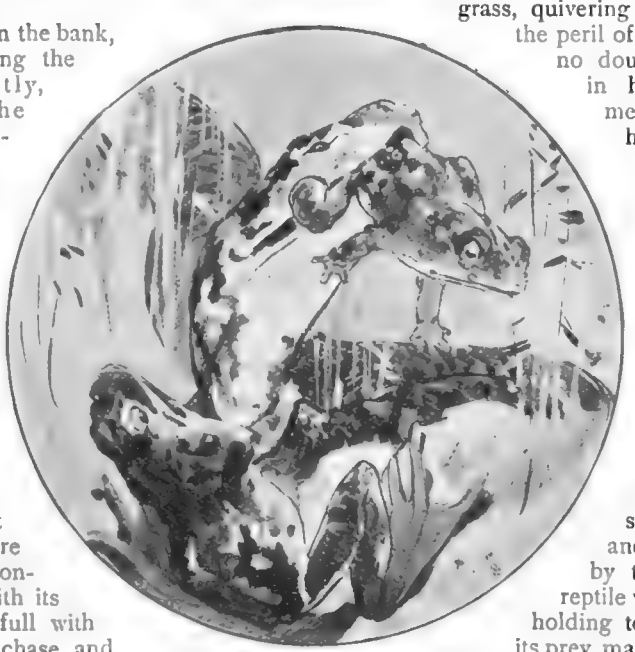
THE ADVENTURE OF TWO FROGS.

IT was just a lovely summer's day. High up the sun shone brilliantly upon a rippling river. The wind rustled in the sedges, and the reed-sparrow twitted near its swaying nest, the brown dragon-fly darted among the rushes, and the hay-scented air was filled with the sleepy droning of countless insects.

Such a day it was that one would have imagined that all the world, both animal and other, was at peace. Yet in the near hay-field the keen-eyed martins were feasting on gay-coloured butterflies as fast as they could capture them.

Two men sat on the bank, idly contemplating the scene. Presently, from among the thick-leaved river-grass, a frog hopped into view, with its brown-spotted, ochre skin shining like freshly-varnished wood, and its small, round eyes brilliant as any gems.

Both men turned their eyes on the bright little reptile. There it squatted motionless, no doubt with its small, fat body full with the spoils of the chase, and ready to stalk more flies before another hour was past.



Now the frog had pulled the snake into the river, and was striving to push its head under the water.

A faint, rustling sound fell upon the watchers' ears. It drew rapidly nearer, as if some long body were drawing itself through the grass. Suddenly the fork-tongued head of a snake peeped through the reeds. Its small, fierce eyes were bent upon the unconscious frog, and, never halting, it bore down upon the little creature. The two men on the bank held their breath, wondering what would happen.

For one instant the long head, with its quick, quivering tongue, towered over the doomed frog. Then, like a flash, it descended. A weird little shriek fell on the watchers' ears, and they saw the helpless frog held fast in the snake's mouth.

Here a strange thing happened. As if in answer to the cry an enormous yellow frog leapt seemingly from nowhere. A moment it squatted on its haunches, as if considering how to act.

Now the two men saw the big frog crouching low, like a tiger in the grass. Then bit by bit they realised the little tragedy that they were witnessing. Here was the male frog, come in answer to the cry of his mate. There he lay, his yellow body pressed low in the grass, quivering with anxiety at the peril of his spouse, and no doubt turning over in his brain some means to contrive her escape, just as any man would do.

Only a moment events thus stood. Repressing with difficulty their cries of wonder, the now excited watchers on the bank saw the big frog leap suddenly forward and grasp the snake by the neck. The reptile writhed, and, still holding tenaciously on to its prey, made to seek refuge in the grass.

The effort was vain. The gallant frog clung on with its front paws, and with its strong back legs pressed hard upon the mud dragged and pulled the snake back. Inch by inch it forced its enemy further away from the shelter of the grass, nearer and nearer to the river.

The two men glanced at each other, nodding their admiration at the ruse. Had they thought for a thousand years such strategy as this would not have come to them.

Now the frog had pulled the snake into the river, and was striving to push its head under the water. At last it succeeded. The reptile choked. Its mouth opened, and with a squirm the frog dropped into the water.

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A Matter of Marriage.

TELLING WHY RUFUS CRIM REMAINED A BACHELOR.

"MARRIAGES," say sentimentalists, "are made in Heaven." Rufus Crim had so far devoted his life mainly to mundane matters. He lived in Charleston, Illinois, worked from eight in the morning until seven at night, and, so it was rumoured, had not been altogether unsuccessful in acquiring wealth. Lastly, he was a bachelor.

However, the time had come when, his worldly matters being in so flourishing a state of prosperity, he considered it his duty to turn his thoughts to matters less material. Expressed plainly, he wanted to find a wife. And if Charleston was not exactly the "Heaven" where marriages might be contracted, there were, thank goodness! other places in the world.

Business had taught Rufus Crim that if he needed a particular article the only way to obtain that article was to advertise for it. Thereupon, with much thought he composed a full account of his own personal charms, his wealth, and his desire to wed.

"Is that all, dear?" asked Mr. Crim innocently.

The following issue of a well-known American matrimonial paper appeared with his advertisement in, and the next day Rufus Crim had the pleasure of knowing how many women there were in the United States all yearning to win his heart.

Certainly the number was most complimentary. Still, Mr. Crim felt that it made the task infinitely more perplexing. That was until he opened a letter and suddenly found a charming photograph reposing in the palm of his hand. Mr. Crim eyed it with the eye of a connoisseur. Much pleased he turned to the letter. Better still—she was a widow! The very thing, thought Mr. Crim. A sensible young widow, already possessing a knowledge of housekeeping, would make an ideal wife for him.

The next day the charming widow received an equally charming letter from the lonely Charleston bachelor. And still a day later the lonely Charleston bachelor received a yet more charming reply from the forlorn little widow, whose name, be it said, was Nina Buck.

After sending and receiving several letters from the widow, Rufus Crim finally wrote one inviting the charming Mrs. Buck to be his wife, and to come to Charleston at once to arrange about the marriage.

At last a day arrived when Rufus Crim stood on the platform of Charleston station, awaiting the arrival of a certain train. There she was—it was she!

A porter came up with a box. "My luggage," smiled young Mrs. Buck.

"Is that all, my dear?" asked Mr. Crim innocently.

"All, oh dear me, no," laughed the little widow gaily. "I have a few little things in the carriage."

Mr. Crim followed her gaze. Then suddenly his face turned white, then it coloured to a fiery crimson.

"It's off! It's all off!" he cried, moving away from the widow as he spoke. "You never told me this, or I should never have asked you to come. It's all off. Take the next train back. It's all off." And he fled.

Never had a man been so imposed upon! Rufus Crim never halted until he had reached the shelter of his home, which, he vowed, he would henceforth, as in the past, share with no one.

There were six sturdy children in the carriage.

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A Life for a Life.

THE GRATITUDE OF AN IGUANA LIZARD.

IN the year 1905 I was working on the mines at Tarcoola, which is 600 miles north-west of Adelaide. One day in February I was reading in my shed, when I suddenly became aware of the presence of a visitor in the shape of an iguana lizard some 2 feet 9 inches in length.

The poor animal was apparently suffering intense agony and pain. A piece of mulga stick had pierced downward through the animal's leg and literally skewered its thigh part of the limb to the ankle, near its sharp claws. I poured out a saucerful of water, which it greedily drank, and drew out the splinter of wood. I then bathed the wounded leg with water, into which I put some Condy's fluid.

After the operation the patient stretched itself by the side of an old box and was soon fast asleep, apparently from exhaustion.

For five or six days I continued to bathe its wound night and morning, and at length Billy (for so I had named him) could run without a limp. Being of an independent turn of mind he used to go off every morning and hunt for his living, returning every evening as regular as the clock.

A sight which nearly froze the blood in my veins.

Now comes the sequel to my story.

Being extra tired one evening I did not take the usual precaution to shake up my blankets afresh that night, but hastily turned in.

I fell asleep. Suddenly I woke, conscious of something cold and clammy moving and twining around my wrist, for my hand was hanging over the side of my stretcher and was thus nearly on the ground. Opening my eyes and glancing down I saw a sight which nearly froze the blood in my veins. A deadly black snake some 3 feet in length had fastened itself around my hand and was climbing up my arm.

I dared not move or try to shake off the hideous reptile, as at the least movement it would send its poisonous fangs into my arm.

Then I somehow became aware of the long, sinewy form of Billy swiftly moving across the floor.

I thought it best to leave my arm as it was and let the two reptiles fight for the mastery, the stake for which was a human life. The snake was, I saw, fully aware of the presence of its enemy, for I saw its dark, wicked eyes positively gleam with venomous rage as it turned its head to meet the foe. It still kept its hold of my wrist.

As if the iguana took in the situation at a glance, he sprang between the snake's outstretched head and my arm. I saw the forked tongue of the snake gleam out wet and dark. I felt the reptile take a firmer hold of my hand as it turned to face the raging fury of Billy. In a flash it was all over. Billy's jaws closed with a snap on the snake's neck and literally tore its head off, and I felt the reptile fall off my wrist, with convulsive movements, on to the ground.

It was moving when I regained consciousness. That I had not passed through some hideous nightmare was shown as my eyes fell upon the dead bodies of Billy and the snake.

The body of poor Billy was swollen to a great size. He must have been bitten as he sprang between my arm and the snake's upraised head. Thus did he repay my kindness by giving his life for my life.

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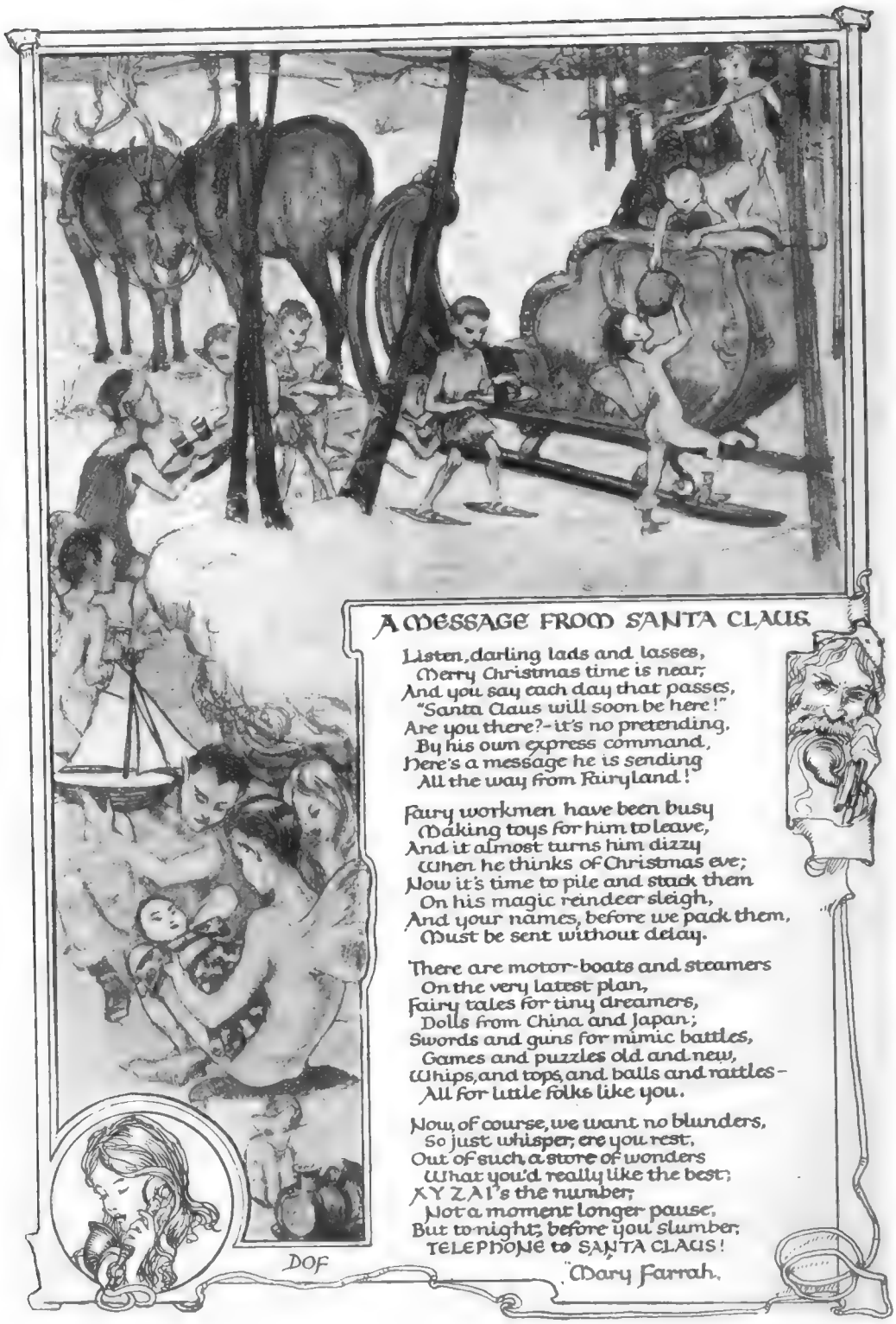

A MESSAGE FROM SANTA CLAUS

Listen, darling lads and lasses,
Merry Christmas time is near;
And you say each day that passes,
"Santa Claus will soon be here!"
Are you there?–it's no pretending.
By his own express command,
Here's a message he is sending
All the way from Fairyland!

Fairy workmen have been busy
Making toys for him to leave,
And it almost turns him dizzy
When he thinks of Christmas eve;
Now it's time to pile and stack them
On his magic reindeer sleigh,
And your names, before we pack them,
Must be sent without delay.

There are motor-boats and steamers
On the very latest plan,
Fairy tales for tiny dreamers,
Dolls from China and Japan;
Swords and guns for mimic battles,
Games and puzzles old and new,
Whips, and tops, and balls and rattles–
All for little folks like you.

Now, of course, we want no blunders,
So just whisper, ere you rest,
Out of such a store of wonders
What you'd really like the best;
X Y Z A I's the number;
Not a moment longer pause;
But to-night, before you slumber,
TELEPHONE to SANTA CLAUS!

Mary Farrah.

DOF

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THE JUNIOR SUBALTERN.

The Story of a Practical Joke.

By Lawrence E. McConaghey.

CHAPTER I.

Young Hodson hadn't been in the Ragshires long, but long enough for Williams and Greene to find out that he was young for his years.

Williams and Greene only had about six months' service apiece, but this fact did not prevent them from having a little fun at Hodson's expense; they settled upon a quaint scheme—which for its novelty alone is worth recording.

In short, they wrote to him from an imaginary being—a Mrs. Armstrong.

The Ragshires were stationed at Gibraltar, and about this time the new docks were being built, and both Williams and Greene therefore decided that Mrs. Armstrong should be the wife of an engineer employed in their construction.

The wretched Hodson was feeling very lost in this big garrison.

He had done his round of duty calls, but although he had been nearly a month on the Rock, had not received a single invitation to dinner, until he received the following—written, as already stated, by Williams—and addressed from the Gloster Hotel:

Dear Mr. Hodson,

How very unobservant of me, but do you know, I only learnt yesterday, through Mr. Greene, of your regiment, that you were in Gibraltar; moreover, he pointed you out to me in the Alameda Gardens, whilst listening to the band, and I at once noticed a marked resemblance between you and Sir Claude Hodson, a very old and dear friend of ours in our Burmah days. Mr. Greene tells me that Sir Claude is your father.

We will be so pleased if you will come and dine with us to-morrow at 8 p.m.

Sincerely yours,
Cleopatra Armstrong.

Hodson was delighted to learn that he was not all alone in this big station, and at once sat down to accept Mrs. Armstrong's kind invitation.

The letter was written in the ante-room, and duly stamped and placed in the mess letter-box.

Both Williams and Greene had anticipated this move, and meeting Sergeant Lemon, the mess sergeant, the next morning on their way to the orderly room, they stopped him.

The sergeant was carrying the letter-bag under his arm.

"Oh, Sergeant Lemon," Greene began, "just let me have a look at the letters for postage."

"Certainly, sir," the sergeant replied, saluting.

Whereupon Greene took the bag, opened it, and was delighted to find the very letter he was in search of.

"I'll keep this, Sergeant Lemon," he exclaimed; "it's one addressed to a Mrs. Armstrong, at the Gloster, and, by the way, if you come across any others similarly addressed, just send them to my quarters."

"Send them to your quarters, sir?" the sergeant ejaculated.

"Yes, because—well, because these people don't really exist."

"Don't exist, sir!" Sergeant Lemon replied, more puzzled than ever.

"Yes, it's only a little joke we are having with Mr. Hodson. However, say nothing

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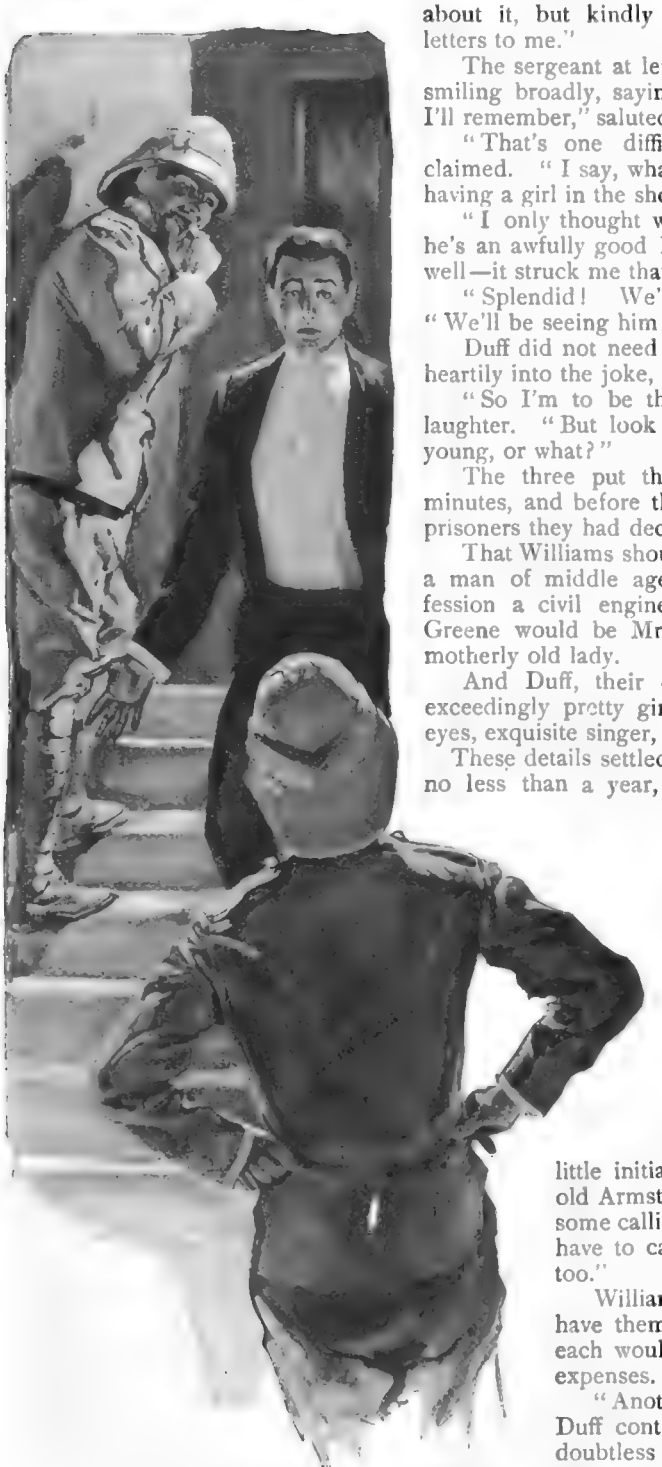

"Oh! You're after 'The Flapper,' too," Greene laughed.

about it, but kindly remember to send any such letters to me."

The sergeant at length began to see the joke, and smiling broadly, saying the while, "Very good, sir, I'll remember," saluted and marched off.

"That's one difficulty overcome," Greene exclaimed. "I say, what was it you were saying about having a girl in the show?"

"I only thought we might ask Duff to help us; he's an awfully good hand at this sort of thing, and well—it struck me that he might be Miss Armstrong."

"Splendid! We'll ask him," Greene replied. "We'll be seeing him at orderly room."

Duff did not need much persuasion, but, entering heartily into the joke, volunteered his services.

"So I'm to be the girl, am I?" he said with laughter. "But look here—am I pretty, ugly, old, young, or what?"

The three put their heads together for a few minutes, and before the colonel had disposed of the prisoners they had decided on the following:

That Williams should impersonate Mr. Armstrong, a man of middle age, robust features, and by profession a civil engineer, employed on the docks; Greene would be Mrs. Armstrong, a quiet, sedate, motherly old lady.

And Duff, their daughter, Miss Armstrong, an exceedingly pretty girl of seventeen, fair hair, blue eyes, exquisite singer, dancer, and rider.

These details settled, Duff, who was their senior by no less than a year, forthwith and most naturally appointed himself the head of affairs.

He gave orders that neither Mr. nor Mrs. Armstrong were to write letters without first consulting him, because, he explained, if they wrote whenever the spirit moved them, Hodson would very soon find out.

"Then," Duff continued, "of course, you fellows, if we want to see the joke through well, we must not grudge a little initial expense; for instance, you, as old Armstrong, Williams, will have to get some calling cards printed—you see you'll have to call on the mess and on Hodson too."

Williams didn't quite see why he should have them done, but Duff explained that each would be expected to defray minor expenses.

"Another item and an important one," Duff continued, "is this. Hodson will doubtless call at the Gloster. I think it's your turn this time, Greene, to stump up. You had better square the manager,

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give him a 'sov.' or so and tell him not to split."

"Why should I?" Greene asked.

"Certainly," both Williams and Duff replied; and so Greene, thinking in his own mind that half-a-crown would suffice, gave in.

"You were saying, Williams," said Duff, "that Hodson has accepted the invitation; we must therefore settle on the best way of putting him off, without arousing his suspicions."

"Telephone." Greene suggested.

"No, write." Williams remarked.

"The best and surest way," Duff continued, "will be to tell Johnny Borge not to turn up."

Johnny Borge was a coachman and carriage contractor all in one, and had supplied the regiments at Buena Vista barracks for many years.

That evening, as Williams and Greene were sauntering up the steps leading to their quarters, they passed Hodson, already decked in evening dress.

"Hulloa, Hodson!" Greene called out. "Dining out, as usual?"

"As usual?" Hodson replied, flushing red at the accusation. "Why, it's the first time!"

"Where are you dining?" Williams asked.

"With people called Armstrong."

"Oh! You're after 'The Flapper' too," Greene laughed.

"What Flapper? I didn't know there was one."

"Yes, and beware of Duff," Williams broke in. "But I say, Hodson, they dine at 7.30, you'd better be quick."

"I'm waiting for Johnny Borge," Hodson replied. "I told him 7.15 sharp. I say, what can I do, Williams?"

"Well, if he doesn't turn up soon, you had better send for the telephone clerk, and send a message to the Gloster that you're ill."

So Hodson waited in vain a few minutes longer, and finally acted on Williams' advice.

The next day Hodson received a very sympathetic letter in reply to his telephone message. This time, however, Miss Armstrong wrote, adding, by way of excuse, that her mother had asked her to do so. She said how sorry they all were to hear of his indisposition, and added that she had made him a little jelly in her leisure hours, which she hoped he would like and benefit by.

As a matter of fact, Greene had interviewed the confectioner, and purchased a really first-class jelly, the sight of which made the conspirators envy Hodson.

Johnny Borge was duly intrusted with the delivery of it in person, and accordingly brought the jelly, carefully packed, to Hodson's quarters.

"This is for you, sir," he said, doing his best to hide a grin, "from the Gloster, sir, with the young lady's compliments."

"Oh, thanks, Johnny," Hodson replied, eyeing the neat parcel critically. "Put it on the table, will you? and, oh! wait a minute, I'll give you a reply."

He forthwith undid the parcel and tasted the contents, enjoying it thoroughly. He considered it jolly good of "The Flapper" to trouble about him, so sat down and wrote the following:

DEAR MISS ARMSTRONG,

I'm deeply indebted to you for the delicious jelly and no less for the kind thought that prompted you in sending it. I'm glad to say I'm quite myself once more.

He sealed the letter, muttering what an awful hyprocrite he was, and dispatched Johnny Borge with the reply, giving him a shilling for his trouble.

Duff received the note in due course and showed it to Greene, remarking what a young liar the *fellah* was. And Greene promised that, if Hodson got ill again, he would concoct something really bad.

Duff at length suggested that Hodson should send "The Flapper" some chocolates.

"Oh, not chocolates," both Greene and Williams broke in.

"Why, don't you fellows like 'em?"

"No—nougat for me," Greene replied.

"I prefer marzipan," Williams exclaimed.

So Duff promised them that all their tastes should be satisfied in turn, adding that he preferred chocolates to any finicking sweets, so the first instalment would contain them.

"But how are you going to work it?" they both asked.

"Leave that to me," Duff replied, "I'm Miss Armstrong, and I'll look after my own interests."

A couple of days later Hodson again heard from the daughter, saying how glad she was that he liked the jelly. Mother is again making use of me, she wrote, and wants me to ask you if you can dine with us on Saturday.

Hodson hastened to accept the kind invitation, and apologised profusely for not having found time to call. He explained fully the arduous duties that a newly-joined subaltern was subjected to and wrote, "What with recruit's drill, adjutant's parade, second in command's lectures, and gymnasium, I feel I haven't a moment to myself."

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Hodson happened to be sitting alone that morning in the ante-room when Duff entered.

Duff, who was his senior by no less than eighteen months, naturally felt that he had a right to be a trifle condescending.

"Hulloa! young fellah!" he began, and how are you settling down; things shaping all right?"

"Yes, thanks very much," Hodson replied.

"Getting to know all the decent people?" Duff continued.

"Well, no, I haven't met many as yet."

"What haven't you called on any one, then?"

"Oh! yes, at least I have done all my duty calls."

"But haven't you called on the Armstrong's for instance?"

"Well, no, I haven't actually called," Hodson tried to explain, "but they knew my people in India, and have kindly asked me to dine to-morrow."

"Have they? Good. I'm also dining there to-morrow. Will you arrange about the brake with Johnny? Tell him not to be late this time."

Duff was clearly the master mind in this practical joke, and had already made up his mind how to get out of the second invitation.

About 7.30 that evening, as he came down in mess kit dressed for dinner, he saw Hodson waiting patiently in the brake ready for dining out.

"By Jove, Hodson," he called out, "didn't my servant give you my message?"

"What message?"

"The dinner's off!" and he took a crumpled letter out of his pocket, which in reality he had only written a few minutes before and dried in front of the fire.

"There read this—but I say, you had better get into mess kit quickly and come to mess."

The wretched Hodson thought a lot, but, since he was the junior subaltern, he didn't dare to give expression to his thoughts.

He climbed sulkily out of the brake, ascended the steps and flinging himself on his bed read the following:

Gloster Hotel, Gibraltar.

MY DEAR MR. DUFF,

As usual mother is making use of her daughter. I am writing to tell you that, unfortunately, we must forego the pleasure of having you and Mr. Hodson to dinner to-night. I am sorry for writing at the eleventh hour, but father has just been invited to a wretched command dinner, and mother doesn't think it would do for us to entertain two gentlemen with father dining elsewhere. You will understand, I feel sure, and please explain to Mr. Hodson, whom we haven't had the pleasure of meeting as yet. Father and mother both knew his people so well in India.

I wonder if you both could come for a ride into Spain to-morrow? Mother suggests meeting at "The Four Corners" at 3.30.

By the way, as you seem bent on paying me that wretched Philippine, bring the box of chocolates with you.

Yours ever, VIOLET.

It did not need much ingenuity on Hodson's part to see that Miss Armstrong and Duff were on excellent terms, and, whether it was jealousy or not that furnished the necessary stimulus, be it said that from that moment onward, Hodson determined to try and cut out his more fortunate brother officer.

CHAPTER II.

Hodson learnt the next morning that Duff would be unable to go for the ride, and in truth he was not sorry to hear it.

He laid a good deal of stress on the chocolates mentioned in Miss Armstrong's letter, and, knowing full well how partial young ladies were to such luxuries, despatched Johnny to get the finest box money could buy.

He had an early luncheon, as he had to meet the party at 3.30 near the "four corners," which were a good three miles from Buena Vista, and, armed with his box of chocolates, he started off on his solitary ride.

Arriving in excellent time, he dismounted and waited by the guard-room. Half an hour went by, yet no sign of the Armstrongs. He waited on for another twenty minutes or so, but still they didn't appear, and finally thinking that he might have missed them, he rode slowly home; and whilst riding up the long hill just above the Almeda Gardens, encountered Williams and Greene on their way down.

Whatever he did, he was determined not to let them know how casually he had been treated.

"Had a jolly ride?" they asked.

"Excellent," Hodson replied, reddening visibly. "We didn't go far though, as it looked like rain."

"Lucky meeting 'em at all," Greene remarked.

Hodson eyed the speaker suspiciously.

"Yes," Williams exclaimed, "they asked me to meet 'em at the North Front Subaltern's Guard last Sunday, and I'm d——d if they ever turned up."

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Hodson smiled. "Didn't they?" he said, and not minding so much now since he wasn't the only one whom they had treated so casually, replied, "Well, as a matter of fact, they didn't turn up for me either."

"Rot!" Greene ejaculated.

"Fact."

And then Williams saw the chocolates under Hodson's arm.

"Hulloa! you sly old devil," he exclaimed; "so you're trying to cut Duff out, are you!"

Hodson denied the accusation emphatically, though his blush did give him away, and then they parted, he to go back to the mess, they to indulge in a cup of tea at the Mediterranean Club.

Forgive and forget, Hodson thought, as he sat down to write to Miss Armstrong, and despatch her the sweetmeats.

In reply he received the following:

Hotel Gloster, Gibraltar.

MY DEAR MR. HODSON,

We are all so sorry about yesterday, but through some unfortunate mistake on mother's part we waited by the North Front Guard. We were there nearly an hour, and had tea with Mr. Jones of your regiment, who was on guard. We then went for a ride into Spain, along the sands, hoping that we might meet you.

Thank you so much for that lovely box of chocolates, but *please, please,* don't waste your money on sweets for me, because I get heaps and heaps, as Mr. Duff, knowing my weakness, very kindly sends me a box of nougat and marzipan every week. I *do* hope we will be more fortunate next time.

Very sincerely yours,

VIOLET ARMSTRONG.

"As if I can't afford to give her as many sweets as Duff can," he exclaimed. "I'll jolly well show her that I can. She evidently prefers nougat and marzipan."

He carried out his determination to the letter, much to Duff and Co.'s satisfaction, and Johnny Borge, bringing the first box into Duff's room, entered with a broad smile.

"What are you grinning at, you old ruffian?" Duff asked.

"A present for Miss Armstrong," Borge replied. "Mr. Greene said I was to bring anything Mr. Hodson gave for Miss Armstrong to you, sir."

"Yes, Johnny, quite right; wait a minute, and I'll give you an answer. Give it to Mr. Hodson in the morning, and don't say where the chocolates go to."

"Oh, no, sir! Mr. Greene has explained all to me, sir," and Johnny Borge retired still smiling broadly.

* * * * *

That evening Duff called a council of war. Both he and Greene thought it high time for the Armstrongs to go home, but on Williams informing them that he had only that morning received a note asking Mr. Armstrong to dine

"A present for Miss Armstrong," Borge replied.

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with Hodson, they agreed to allow them to stay on a few days longer.

Regarding Mr. Armstrong's invitation to the mess, Greene suggested that it might be carrying the joke a bit far, keeping the Colonel and the whole mess waiting; but Williams pointed out that the old man had called, and that his name had been entered in the visitors' book, so he didn't quite see how the C.O. could ever find out.

So they determined to accept the invitation, and Borge brought Hodson the reply, together with Miss Armstrong's acknowledgment, the following morning.

It is so sweet of you (Miss Armstrong wrote). Do you know, I have made myself perfectly ill eating all those lovely sweets! Both mother and father ate some as well, and, poor father! Well, I think he ate more than were really good for him. (Williams could vouch for that sentence, as excess of marzipan had prevented his attending adjutant's parade.) But then, how could the poor man help it when they were so delicious! Poor mother was quite out of it, because she only really likes chocolates. They were ever so much nicer than any Mr. Duff sends, but please don't tell him so.

I must really find you something in return.

Yours,
VIOLET ARMSTRONG.

The above letter Hodson placed carefully in a drawer together with the others, and then went to warn in for a guest on guest night.

* * * * *

About this time Hodson wrote to his father, and, as was only to be expected, wrote a good deal about the Armstrongs. He received in reply the following:

In India one makes so many new friends, and unhappily forgets so many old ones, that no doubt the people you mention date from my Rangoon days (that is before you were born). I have no recollection of them, however, but don't tell them so when you meet them. From your letter they appear to be very nice, kind people and want to take an interest in you; be sure, therefore, to give them my best salaams (a word we use commonly in Burma) when you meet them.

On the guest night in question, the mess waited fifteen minutes for Mr. Armstrong, and finally gave him up. The wretched Hodson was profuse in his apologies on his guest's behalf, but Captain Parker, the P.M.C., took but little notice of him, and later, when Hodson (having waited in vain another ten minutes or so) joined the others at dinner, Duff remarked, "If I were you, Hodson, I'd write him a pretty stiff letter in the morning."

Hodson, however, did nothing of the sort, for he was really beginning to fall in love with Miss Armstrong, and was wise enough to foresee that ultimate success lay in the father's hands. So the next morning when he received Mr. Armstrong's apologies, he accepted them *in toto*, although his letter did contain but a paltry excuse.

* * * * *

Duff and company were now of one mind, and agreed that the Armstrongs could not remain on the Rock any longer, and so a couple of days later when Hodson heard from "the flapper," he was very sad at heart.

We are all *very, very* sad (she wrote) because father has just received orders to leave for Glasgow at once on urgent business, and says that it's more than probable that we will not return.

The P. and O. leaves this afternoon, we are all bent upon seeing you; can you come and lunch with us on board at 1.30? We don't actually sail till 3 p.m. *Do come,* you will easily be able to get off parade for once, won't you?

Tell your adjutant the reason why, and if you like, mention my name. Captain Graham and I are old friends. Good-bye till 1.30.

Yours,
VIOLET.

So Hodson in great haste rushed off to find the adjutant, but all in vain. Graham, who had been let into the secret, was very sorry, but he could not let him off.

Later Duff met Hodson in the mess.

"Hodson," he began, "did I hear you telling Graham that 'the flapper' is leaving Gib?"

"Yes," Hodson replied sadly.

"By Jove, that's funny, because I was only dining there last night, and they never said anything about going then."

"They only knew themselves, this morning," Hodson replied.

"I'm awfully sorry they're going," Duff continued. "Violet's such a good sort, isn't she?"

"I don't know her."

"You don't know her! Come, Hodson, don't mind telling me all about it; she told me, only last night, how kind you were in sending her sweets. You *have* sent her sweets?"

"Yes, I suppose I did send her a box or two, but that was only because her people and mine were such friends—and——"

"I give her sweets myself, you know."

"Yes, I know you do."

"How do you know? Do you correspond?"

"No—at least she only acknowledges the things I send her."

Just then a few more subalterns entered and the conversation dropped.

Still Hodson could not help thinking that if the Armstrongs had been as anxious to see

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him as they pretended to be, they might have asked him the previous evening in place of Duff. Soon after lunch, as Hodson, sick at heart, climbed the hill leading to the Windmill Hill parade ground, he encountered Johnny Borge, with a letter and parcel in his hand.

"Been looking for you, sir," Borge began, handing him the parcel. "The young lady asked me to say how sorry she was, sir, you couldn't lunch on the boat."

Hodson opened the letter and read,

MY DEAR MR. HODSON,

I promised you a small present, didn't I? I now send it with my best wishes. I'm going to ask you a last favour, I love Gib. so, and would so like to get all the Gib. news—will you write to me occasionally?

Good-bye from us all,

Yours,
VIOLET.

He next undid the parcel, and saw to his unbounded delight the face of a really pretty girl, and written across the photo the pretty name, Violet!

"Thanks, Johnny," he said, feeling a lump in his throat, as he turned to face parade once more.

CHAPTER III.

At this point the joke which had been going on so swimmingly for nearly three weeks came to an abrupt conclusion, owing mainly to a little indiscretion on Williams' part, for the latter indulged in a little fun all to himself, and without consulting either Duff or Greene had sent Hodson a letter from Mr. Armstrong which ran thus:

MY DEAR HODSON,

You must excuse the following lines, but as a very old friend of Sir Claude, your father, I feel that I am at liberty to write them; moreover, I look upon it as a duty to yourself and your people.

I can't express in mere words how sorry I was to learn, from a mutual acquaintance, about a very unhappy habit which you have lately acquired. Stop it, my dear boy, before it gets a serious hold on you.

Drink has been the curse of many a good man, and happily it's never too late to mend. Pull up, young man!

Ever yours sincerely,
HENRY ARMSTRONG.

Now, since Hodson was a teetotaler, he naturally knew that no one could accuse him of this weakness, and this set his mind a-thinking, and he thought a lot.

In the meantime Duff, Williams, and Greene met in Greene's room, Duff seemed doubtful about the result of Williams' action.

"You silly ass!" he exclaimed, "you've most likely gone and spoiled the whole jest. How the deuce do you expect him to take a letter of that kind in? I told you not to go and write without first consulting me. I got this letter from him this morning. Listen:

MY DEAR MISS ARMSTRONG,

I feel more sorry than I can say about your leaving Gib., because I cannot possibly meet you now. But, perhaps it is just as well after all, because you really have an enormous appetite for sweets, and a subaltern's pay has its limitations.

I think there is no name in the world like Violet. If I had thought of it I would have sent you crystallised violets instead of marzipan.

I cannot understand the cruel statements in your father's letter of yesterday. I have been a teetotaler all my life.

In consideration of his baseless slanders I inclose the bills for your sweets, and also those for cabhire, incurred on the various occasions when you put me off at the last minute after having invited me to dinner.

In conclusion I must thank you for your photograph, which bears a striking resemblance to that of Miss Lottie Lightfoot, of the Frivolity Theatre.

Good-bye.

Yours,
JACK.

Williams and Greene laughed heartily.

"Well, I don't see why you should be sick with me, Duff," Williams exclaimed. "You see, Hodson was almost bound to know some day.

"My dear William," replied Duff, "you are remarkably obtuse. There was no earthly reason why Hodson should ever have known that Miss Armstrong was non-existent. I can only suggest that, since you have let the cat out of the bag, you shall pay the bills for sweets and cabs."

Then Greene took up the tale.

"Oh! You *are* a silly ass, Williams!" he exclaimed. "My word, you are an ass. Of course, you've gone and given the whole show away, and this is Hodson's polite, though none the less effective, way of showing us that he has found us out."

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AN UNEXPECTED MEETING

Upon my smart new bicycle
One lovely day
I set off for my maiden spin,
So gay.

I rode along through leafy lanes
With heart elate;
By practice I should learn to ride
Quite straight.

Another cyclist meeting me
I soon descried;
Like me, he wobbled much from side
To side.

The reckless way in which he rode,
I thought, was rash;
And, even while I thought, there came
A crash!

Like fleet gazelle I soared above
My handle-bars;
And shining constellations saw
Of stars.

Far upwards through the balmy air
I sped my flight;
All earthly things receded from
My sight.

How far through realms of space I soared
I cannot tell;
Then down to this terrestrial sphere
I fell.

The other cyclist I had met
I could not see;
But found the form on which I sat
Was he.

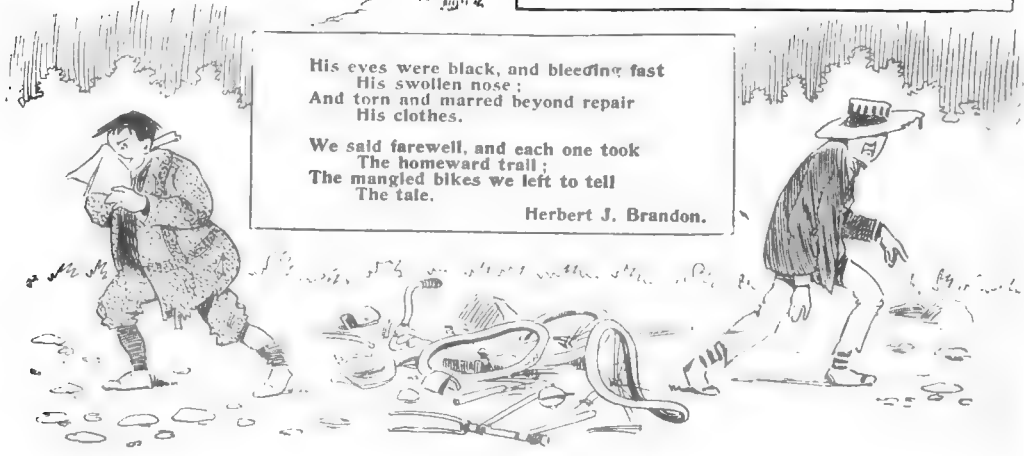
Then slowly rising to our feet,
With groans of pain,
We tried to sort out our machines
In vain.

The sorrows showered upon me by
A fate perverse
Seemed lightened when I saw that he
Was worse.

His eyes were black, and bleeding fast
His swollen nose;
And torn and marred beyond repair
His clothes.

We said farewell, and each one took
The homeward trail;
The mangled bikes we left to tell
The tale.

Herbert J. Brandon.



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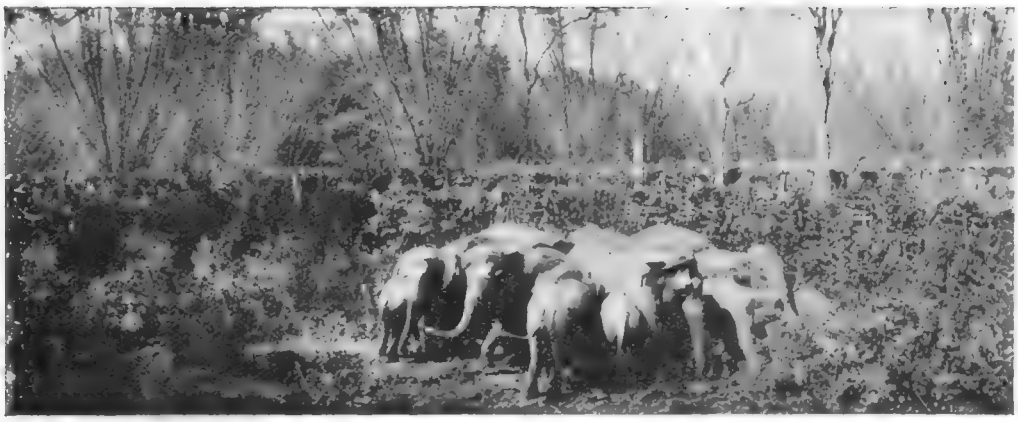

A herd of elephants after having been driven into the last inclosure of the stockade.

AN ELEPHANT DRIVE.

How the Greatest Animals in the World are Captured.

By a Member of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales' Party in India.

When in India recently I had the rare good fortune to witness the final stages of a big elephant round-up, organised by the Maharajah of Mysore.

A drive of this sort takes place only once in twelve or fifteen years. Elephants live long—and the score or more of the wise beasts kept in the Maharajah's stables, who earn their living by piling wood, and by taking part in tiger hunts and triumphal processions, do not often need to be replenished. Moreover, elephant-hunting is expensive. For two or three months before the actual day of capture arrives, the jungle is beaten for a distance of perhaps 200 miles; and enormous numbers of beaters must be employed to drive the herds to their destination, through miles of jungle and forest—marching them onward by day, and guarding them by night with the aid of bonfires, of which elephants have a wholesome dread.

Our party was established at the shooting-camp at Karapur, some forty-five miles from Mysore. One eventful evening we drove out in motors on a road through the jungle to witness the final stage of the elephants' march, and their arrival at the doors of the place of captivity. After a six miles' run we came to a bend of the river Kubari, where, dismounting, we took our places on a prepared station, behind a screen of green boughs.

There set in a weary time of waiting. Below us lay the river, 100 yards wide at the bend, very pretty and placid in the twilight, its smooth waters broken only where they swirled round projecting rocks, or where a mahseer—the native salmon—rose to the surface. Beyond the river stretched the illimitable jungle. To our right, about a quarter of a mile up-stream, a big barricade had been erected across the water, beside which was the opening to the kheddar, or stockade. To our left, the banks rose too steeply to be climbed; so that when the elephants should be driven into the river they would be forced to pass along up-stream, in front of our position at the bend, until they would come to the barricade, where the kheddar's opening would invite them to leave the water—and their freedom—behind them.

We waited for over an hour patiently and in a silence broken only by the rustling of the bamboos overhead, and away in the distance by the shouts of the ever closing-in beaters. Suddenly, more sounds broke out in the jungle beyond the river—growing swiftly into the roar of an army approaching. Wild yells came from beaters and shikaris—we could hear the slashing of bamboo sticks, the loud noise of rattles, the discharge of old guns loaded with blank cartridge, and now and again an elephant's roar. Then the herd came plunging, without any undue haste, through the bamboo clumps towards the water.

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Tame elephants entering the stockade in order to assist in the removal of the captured wild ones.

It was fine to see the great black avalanche taking to the water. Finding themselves inclosed on one side by jungle fires and lines of torches, on the other by the yelling beaters, the elephants made stately plunges into the river, where their leader showed the way across the ford and up-stream. The herd, about twenty-five strong, passed so closely to our barrier that we could have thrown biscuits on to their backs. The din of the beaters increased in frenzy to prevent the herd turning back, and the river banks behind burst into flames as bonfire after bonfire was lighted.

We now ran along the river path, parallel with the advancing herd, to watch the elephants turn from the water into the kheddar. All went well; the whole herd peaceably followed their leader into captivity; and the heavy iron gate of the inclosure dropped with a bang—having been released, by the way, by the hand of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. Our party then returned to camp through the fast darkening jungle.

Two days later the Maharajah conducted us forth again to the stockade to see the interesting and exciting work of securing the wild elephants, and leading them into captivity, with the help of trained and tamed elephants—mahouts on their backs.

This time we took up our position within the main stockade—of about forty acres—overlooking a small, circular inclosure contained within the other, measuring only some twenty-five yards in diameter. Sheltered behind another screen of green boughs, we had a good view of the V-shaped avenue up which the elephants were to be driven until they entered the inner ring.

Soon the yelling beaters had most of the elephants packed in a mass at the funnel's mouth, urging them forward with the weirdest shouts and much rattling of rattles and the firing of guns. Behind the beaters stood a line of tame elephants, appreciatively watching the proceedings. One savage old cow gave a lot of trouble, and resisted all efforts

After the capture the wild elephants are tied on to two or more tame ones and towed to the river for a drink.

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The same elephant as in the previous photograph being dragged along to the water. She refuses to get on her feet.

to drive her up the avenue. Suddenly she broke from the herd, and sent the beaters scattering right and left as she rushed upon them. They ran for shelter when she came unpleasantly close to a deep ditch around the stockade, across which they darted into safety over single planks. There was some method in the old lady's madness, for presently she singled out one particular man, and gave him such a run for life as he will never forget. She raced him to the ditch, caught him within a yard of it, and then with her trunk sent him flying into it with a blow that knocked him senseless. Had she been a couple of inches nearer the force of the blow certainly would have killed him.

The other elephants gave less trouble, and soon were safely within the smaller stockade, huddled uneasily together not ten feet below our stand.

The next item in the programme was the appearance on the stage at our feet of five or six tame elephants, who made a stately entrance through the cautiously-raised gate, each carrying his mahout on his back, armed with long spear and lassoing rope. These sagacious monsters were backed in among the trumpeting, uneasy herd, proceeding to range themselves in pairs alongside three or four of their wild brothers, to whom they gave affectionate squeezings.

Meantime, the whole herd heaved back and forth, and shrill, squealing trumpetings came from some of the smaller elephants, dodging between the mighty legs of their elders. Now and again an elephant would deliberately approach the stockade to test its strength, and anything but pleasant was it to feel the mighty brute bump up against a post beneath one's seat. The stockade would have gone down like match-boards had the elephants rushed upon it in combination; but fortunately this didn't occur to them.

The first elephant to be tied up was the biggest bull of the herd—a fine old tusker.

This baby elephant—one day old—was born after the capture of its mother

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The tame elephants edged their way alongside him, cut him out from the others, and pushed him over to the roping-stumps, where they held him tightly jammed between them. The men on foot pluckily dashed in between the legs of the tame elephants and lashed up the legs of the wild one, tying him fast to the posts. Simple as it sounds, it was the work of three hours.

The mahouts now set about clearing the ring by capturing some of the smaller elephants—a work in which they were much helped by a wise old tame tusker, who now and then employed his tusks to lift some squealing, struggling youngster cleanly into the air, dropping him with a thump which gave him a severe lesson in good manners. One after another the smaller elephants were noosed by ropes deftly thrown over their heads, and dragged away by the tame elephants, to be led to the river for a much-needed drink of water, and thence to a clearing in the jungle, where each beast was made fast between two trees.

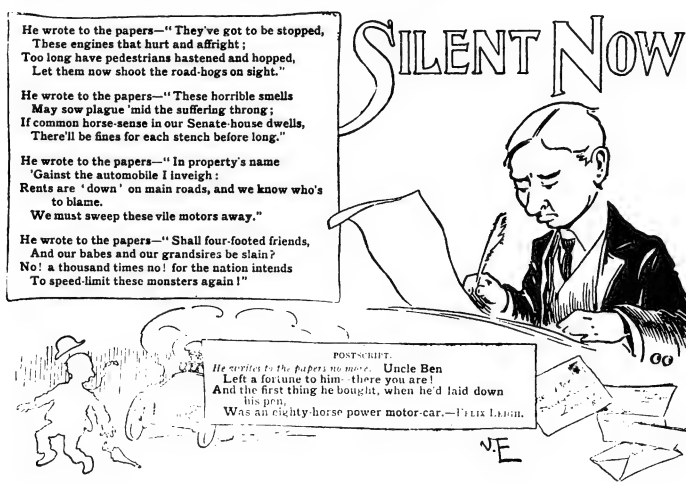
When the time of the old bull came, who for long had been vainly struggling against his lashings, four or five of the trained elephants were harnessed to him by six ropes—one from each of his legs, and two from his neck; then all hauled in unison and dragged him away. During the harnessing the tame tusker stood before his wild brother, and, by affectionately rubbing him with his trunk, did his best to bring him to sweet reasonableness—not, however, very successfully, for many felled trees and posts marked his course to the water.

How the wild old fellow did enjoy his bath!—marching into the river up to his middle, and joyfully spouting the cool water over his back. At last he, too, was tied up in the jungle clearing with the others.

Finally, there remained only the savage cow to be dealt with. She, still in the outer inclosure, evaded capture for a long time; but at last the tame elephants cornered her, a mahout cleverly dropped a noose over her head, another did the same, and she was a prisoner. We heard later that they never succeeded in taming her fiery spirit, and she died very soon after capture, of a broken heart.

So the day ended. The sun had set before we returned to camp, after a spectacle which all agreed to be one of the most interesting and exciting of their lives.

The subsequent process of breaking in the wild elephants is comparatively simple, thanks to their high intelligence. They soon learn to regard their keepers as friends; and probably within twelve months they will be as tame as dogs. Each will be worth from £150 to £250.


He wrote to the papers—"They've got to be stopped,
These engines that hurt and affright;
Too long have pedestrians hastened and hopped,
Let them now shoot the road-hogs on sight."
He wrote to the papers—"These horrible smells
May sow plague 'mid the suffering throng;
If common horse-sense in our Senate-house dwells,
There'll be fines for each stench before long."
He wrote to the papers—"In property's name
'Gainst the automobile I inveigh:
Rents are 'down' on main roads, and we know who's to blame.
We must sweep these vile motors away."
He wrote to the papers—"Shall four-footed friends,
And our babes and our grandsires be slain?
No! a thousand times no! for the nation intends
To speed-limit these monsters again!"
SILENT NOW!
POSTSCRIPT.
He wrote to the papers, no more. Uncle Ben
Left a fortune to him—there you are!
And the first thing he bought, when he'd laid down his pen,
Was an eighty-horse power motor-car.—FELIX LEIGH.
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LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

A Play for Children.

By Hilda L. Dawson.

CHARACTERS:

Little Red Riding Hood—Elsie.
Her Mother.
Her Grandmother.
The Wolf.
A Woodman.

(Anyone wishing to perform this little play must apply for permission to the Editor.)

Scene I.—*A kitchen—Table, centre—Left, cupboard—Right, window.* Mother *sitting at table, knitting.*

Mother. Dear, dear! I have dropped *another* stitch! I really shall be glad when I've finished this shawl for my mother. Poor old lady! It's just what she wants for the winter. I do wish she didn't live so far away in that wood now that she's ill. (*Stops knitting, and looks out of window.*) I think, as it's such a fine day, Elsie shall go and see her. I wonder if I've anything nice to send her? (*Gets up and goes to cupboard.*) Yes—here's that cake I made yesterday, and she shall have six fresh eggs as well, and some butter. (*Takes them out, and puts on table—goes to door, R., and calls.*) Elsie! Elsie! I want you.

Elsie (*from outside*). Yes, mother. I'm just coming.

Mother. Bring your basket with you.

(*Enter* Elsie, *R., with basket and skipping rope.*)

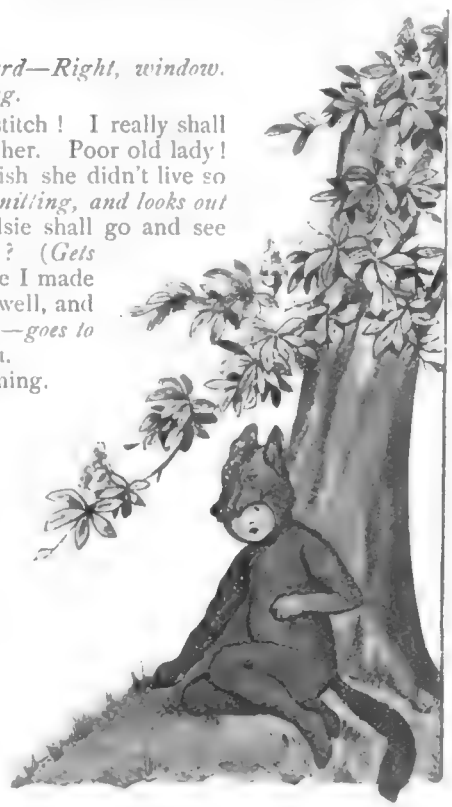
Elsie. Here I am, mother. I've been having such a splendid game.

Mother. Well, I want you to stop now, and go and see Granny. You know she is still ill and in bed; I'm afraid she's very lonely. (*Fetches Elsie's cloak.*) Here's your cloak—I will put it on for you. No wonder they all call you Little Red Riding Hood.

Elsie. Thank you, mother. Why did you want the basket?

Mother. Oh, I want you to take Granny a little present—this cake (*putting it in basket*).

Elsie. Oh! How lovely! She will be pleased, won't she? And these eggs, too? And this butter?



Wolf: **My legs are quite weak.**

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Elsie: I do hope Granny will like these.

MOTHER. Yes, all of them. (*Puts cloth over basket, and gives it to Elsie.*) Now, Elsie, you must go *straight* there and *straight* back again. Don't speak to anyone at all. You know there's an old wolf who lives in the wood. Whatever happens, don't speak to him, as he's horrid, and would eat you if he could.

ELSIE (*startled*). Oh! mother; how dreadful! I certainly won't speak to him. (*Kisses her mother.*) Good-bye.

MOTHER. Good-bye, darling. Give my love to Granny, and don't forget what I say. (*Exit* ELSIE, *R.*) I do hope Mr. Wolf won't choose this afternoon to walk in the woods. (*Watches Elsie from window—sits down and picks up knitting.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE II.—*In the wood.—Path running across stage—Flowers growing, L.—Tree, centre—Entrances L. and R.—Wolf walking across stage disconsolately, rubbing his sides.*

WOLF. By Jove! I *am* hungry! I haven't even seen a sparrow to-day, much less tasted one! (*Gazes at tree, and shakes his head.*) Dear, dear! I can't walk any further. (*Sinks down by tree, R.*) My legs are quite weak. To think of me starving! (*Leans head against the tree.* ELSIE *heard humming in the distance.* WOLF *suddenly hears—sits up.*)

WOLF. What's that? (*Jumps up very quietly.* ELSIE *heard coming nearer, still singing. Hops about joyfully.*) It *isn't* a sparrow, or a chicken! No, it's a real, live little girl! (*Chuckles and hops about laughing. Peeps down wood.*) It's Red Riding Hood! Oh, I *am* excited! (*Hides behind tree. Enter* ELSIE *L., walks to front, carrying flowers, stops and looks at them.*)

ELSIE. There! I *do* hope Granny will like these. I will put them on the top of the basket like this. (*Sits down in front of tree, and arranges them.*) That's very pretty. Oh, dear; I wish I could have a piece of this cake. I am quite hungry and tired! Anyway, I will stop here a little while. Oh, what lovely flowers those are! (*Jumps up towards L., picks flowers, sits down again by tree, upsets basket.*)

ELSIE. Oh, dear! I hope the eggs aren't broken! (*Picks them up.*)

(WOLF *creeps from behind, and sits down beside her.* ELSIE *is going to lean against tree again, leans against* WOLF *instead. Turns, screams.*)

ELSIE. Oh! the wolf! (*Jumps up towards L.*)

WOLF (*in gentle voice, R.*). Don't be frightened, my dear!

ELSIE. Oh, but I am! Mother said you were horrid, and would eat me!

WOLF. Oh, what a mistake! I couldn't touch anything but chops!

ELSIE (*aside*). Chops! Oh, well! that's all right. But I'm going on directly now. (*Picks up baskets and starts.*)

WOLF. Oh! please don't go yet, dear Little Red Riding Hood. I've had no one to talk to all day; you can't think how lonely I am.

ELSIE. Oh, are you? I'm very sorry; but I can't stop with you. I have to go to Granny. She is very lonely, too.

WOLF. Are you going to see your Granny? What a dear, kind little girl you are!

ELSIE. He really isn't very horrid, after all!

WOLF. I believe we are both going the same way, if you are going to your Granny's, so suppose we have a race?

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Elsie: Good evening, Granny.

ELSIE. Oh, very well. I can't run very fast, as I have these eggs to carry.

WOLF. I will carry them, and you shall go the short cut through the wood. I will go round, as I have such long legs. That's fair, isn't it?

ELSIE (*gives him basket*). Yes. You will be sure to leave them at the cottage door if you win, won't you?

WOLF. Oh, dear me! yes! One, two, three —off! (ELSIE *runs off R.*) Ha! ha! How very funny! I know a shorter cut still, and what a good dinner I'm going to have! I'd no idea that Granny *still* lived there. (*Runs off stage R. laughing.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE III.—*Grandmother's cottage.*—WOLF *in bed, L., in G.'s nightclothes and cap, laughing and chuckling.*

WOLF. Ah! that *was* a good dinner! But I've room for more. I hope I look like Granny did. It's a pity my nose is so long. I wonder when Red Riding Hood will come. Perhaps she is still picking flowers. I must remember to say what Granny said when I knocked: "Pull the bobbin, and the latch will fly up." (*Knock outside.*) Ha! ha! Pull the bobbin and the latch will fly up. (*Hides his face under clothes. Enter* ELSIE, *R., stands at foot of bed.*)

ELSIE. Good evening, Granny.

WOLF. (*Coughs and sniffs.*)

ELSIE. Isn't your cold any better, Granny? It does sound bad. (*Puts basket on table.*)

WOLF. (*Coughs again and groans.*)

ELSIE. I *am* sorry for you, granny! (*Comes towards bed.*) Mother has sent you a cake, some eggs, and butter (*showing things*). But, Granny, you don't look yourself *at all* to-day! What big ears you've got!

WOLF. All the better to hear with, my dear.

Elsie: Oh, thank you so much.

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ELSIE. But, Granny, what large eyes you've got!

WOLF. The better to see you with, my dear.

ELSIE (*sounding frightened*). Oh, Granny, what great big teeth you've got!

WOLF (*springing out of bed*). All the better to eat you with! (ELSIE *runs to corner of room screaming.* WOLF *after her.*)

ELSIE. Help! Help! Oh, the wolf! (*Loud noise heard outside—door bursts open. Enter* WOODMAN *R.*)

WOODMAN. Hallo! What's this? What's this! Ah, you rascal! (*Sees* WOLF *an' points gun at him.* WOLF *stops, rolls on the ground L. shot d ad.* ELSIE *sobbing*).

ELSIE. Oh, thank you *so* much! Oh, I wish I had been good, and done what mother told me. (*Sits on bed, still crying.*) Is he *quite* dead?

WOODMAN. Yes, yes. Quite. But you've had a very narrow escape, missie; your mother's just outside. I saw her coming down the wood, looking for you.

(*Enter* MOTHER, *R., running.* ELSIE *runs to her.*)

ELSIE. Oh, mother, mother. I *am* so frightened! The wolf has tried to eat me!

MOTHER. Oh, Elsie, I'm afraid you've been naughty, and talked to him when I told you not to—and *where's* your poor Granny? (ELSIE *cries.*)

WOODMAN. I should think, ma'am, the wolf has eaten her!

MOTHER (*sobbing*). Oh, mother, mother!

ELSIE (*sobbing*). Oh, Granny, Granny!

(*Both sitting on bed.*)

WOODMAN. This is *very* sad. Perhaps I can cut open the wolf and get her out alive! (*Rolls Wolf off stage L. Exit himself.*) (*From outside.*) Ha! Ha! What luck!

(*Enter* GRANNY *and* WOODMAN, *L.* ELSIE *and* MOTHER *both start up.*)

GRANNY. My dears, here I am! Don't cry any more. I am not at all hurt—but I've had a *very* stuffy time! (MOTHER *and* ELSIE *both run and kiss her.*)

MOTHER. I *am* glad this dreadful time is over, and we owe *all* our happiness to the Woodman——

WOODMAN. Oh, ma'am, I'd do *anything* for Little Red Riding Hood!

CURTAIN.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

My sister Kate at seventeen
Was thought extremely pretty,
And anything she'd do or say
Was reckoned smart and witty.
The Reverend Augustus Grey,
With Captain May,
And Doctor Day,
Were eligible swains, and they
Were all in love with Kitty.

My sister Kate at twenty-eight
Was still considered pretty;
But when she jilted Mr. Grey
I thought it was a pity.
Then false and fickle Captain May
He sailed away
To Bengal Bay—
Thus only leaving Doctor Day
Still faithful to our Kitty.

My sister Kate, now thirty-eight—
Though buxom still and witty—
Is on the shelf and there she'll stay,
And so I'll end my ditty.
An old maid she is bound to —eh?
What's that you say?
Hip, hip, hooray!
She's going to marry Doctor Day,
Who well deserves our Kitty.

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TIED WITH BLUE RIBBON.

AUNT Sophia is gaunt and grey;
She's an old maid, too, but I've heard them say
That, out of the dust and the light of day,
She treasures—though some won't believe 'tis true—
A bundle of love letters tied with blue.

Aunt Sophia seems hard and stern;
You feel surprised when you chance to learn
Of the letters she hadn't the heart to burn—
Though the ink is pale, and the ribbon, too,
Is limp and faded that once was blue.

Aunt Sophia thinks me a flirt;
Calls me "giddy" and "vain" and "pert"—
But, somehow or other, it doesn't hurt
When you happen to think, as I often do,
Of that bundle of love letters tied with blue.

Was Aunt Sophia the one to blame?
Or did he prove false? Though his very name
Is quite unknown to me, all the same,
I like to imagine his heart was true
When the ink was black and the ribbon new.

Ada Leonora Harris.

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From "Mr. X" to every single (and married) individual one of his Readers all over the world: A Right Merry Christmas, Packed with Good Things!

Puzzle Penknives, Puzzle Purses, or Packs of ROYAL Playing Cards, will be given as prizes to readers who forward new puzzles, problems, or other tricks which are inserted in this feature. Any readers communicating with "Mr. X," and wishing for a reply should inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. All letters should be addressed to "Mr. X" (care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

"STEP BY STEP."

In the August ROYAL "Mr. X" offered a prize of five shillings for what was in his opinion the best sentence so constructed that each word contained one letter more than the word preceding it.

The competition was very popular, and "Mr. X" suggests it as a capital round game for winter evenings.

A selection of amusing examples follows:

20 WORDS:

B. is the most truly trying husband existing: fearfully, worryingly inquisitive; exasperating, inconsiderate: supernaturally procrastinating—antagonistically ultra-undevotional, quasi-philosophical, semi-hypochondriacal, pseudo-philanthropist.

15 WORDS:

I am ill, also needy; severe illness, becoming dangerous, overwhelms—competitor's occasionally distinguished characteristic notwithstanding.

14 WORDS:

I do not wish Katie always kissing complete strangers, especially frightfully spotted-nosed inexperienced contortionists.

12 WORDS:

I am fat, only quite active, because stoutish gentlemen frequently gesticulate mechanically.

"I do not like these common Chicago sausages," exclaimed Archibald's grandmother pathetically.

I do not know whose camera Patrick borrowed negatives progressed excellently nevertheless.

11 WORDS:

We pay this price gladly because sentence submitted represents meritorious contribution.

9 WORDS:

Wanted, capable gardener, abstainer. Protestant, trustworthy, well-mannered. — Fitzallendale, Wheathampstead.

The award is given under "Results."

SMASHED UP.

GREEN: "I say, old chap, did you hear of Smith's accident yesterday evening while out walking?"

GREY: "No. What happened?"

GREEN: "He had a fall and broke seven ribs."

GREY: "Good gracious! Is he very ill?"

GREEN: "No. Why?"

GREY: "Seven ribs broken, you said?"

GREEN: "Yes—of his umbrella!"

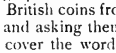
APPEARANCES ARE DECEPTIVE.

The word "transmission" printed below is exactly as it occurs shortly after the word **NOTICE** on an ordinary telegraph form. Here it is:

transmission

You will amuse your friends by showing them a telegraph form, laying out on the table a set of British coins from a halfpenny to a sovereign, and asking them which coin will most nearly cover the word "transmission." Well, looking at it as it stands above, which do you think?—five-shilling piece, half-a-crown? All wrong—the threepenny-bit!

Yes, and that same little coin will completely obliterate the word "notice," as printed above.



PERFECTLY CORRECT.

RICHARD: "Poets are always amusing, don't you think?"

MABEL: "Amusing is hardly the proper word, is it?"

RICHARD: "Well, they are generally *a-musing* over their verses, aren't they?"

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Fairly Knocked.

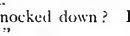
[We have got some funny expressions in our language, haven't we? Listen to this conversation, for example.—"Mr. X."]

Knox: "I hear your brother is away from business. Not up to the knocker, eh?"

Cox: "No. He was knocked down in a fight last week."

Knox: "Knocked down? Do you mean knocked out?"

Cox: "Well, put it that way if you like He's knocked up now, anyhow."



Chestnuts.

Pester: "If you wished to make a chestnut horse black, what would you do?"

Tester: "Paint it, I think."

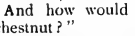
Pester: "And how would you make a black horse chestnut?"

Tester: "Paint it also, I suppose."

Pester: "I should bury it."

Tester: "Why?"

Pester: "Because if you bury a horse-chestnut long enough it will turn black of itself."



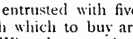
Five Pounds' Worth.

Jones was entrusted with five pounds the other day with which to buy articles for sale at a bazaar. When he came back he showed the committee three different purchases.

"Now," said he, "the cost of one of these was ten shillings, the cost of the second was three shillings, and of the third, sixpence. I bought no other varieties of goods, and I spent the five pounds exactly. How many of each did I buy?"

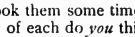
The committee, having nothing better to do at the moment, set to work and figured it out—but it took them some time.

How many of each do *you* think?



Maddening.

If it takes a man a week to eat a ham, how long will it take him to eat a hammer?



At the Dinner-Table.

Father: "There's no mustard in this pot."

Bobby: "We don't need any, dad."

Father: "And why not, indeed?"

Bobby: "Because we're all mustered here."

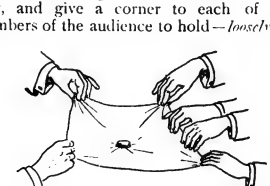
The Ring and the Coin.

An amusing trick for amateur conjurers, in six parts:

Part I.: Lay flat on a table a *silk* handkerchief.

Part II.: At its centre place a penny or larger coin.

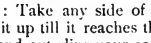
Part III.: Gather together the four corners of the handkerchief, pass them through a small curtain ring until the coin touches the ring, and give a corner to each of four members of the audience to hold—*loosely*.



Part IV.: Challenge the audience to get the ring without causing any corner to be released.

Part V.: The audience is baffled.

Part VI.: Take any side of the handkerchief, roll it up till it reaches the ring, slip it through—and out slips your coin!

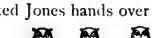


A Record Kick.

Brown Minor: "I bet you sixpence I can kick a football out of sight."

Jones Major: "Bosh! But I'll take you."

Brown kicks the football over a wall, and the disgusted Jones hands over the sixpence.



Simple.

Jack: "I say, Bill, if one sheep was facing north and another sheep facing south, how could they see one another without turning?"

Bill: "Why, look between their legs, of course."

Jack: "No. Give it up?"

Bill: "I suppose so."

Jack: "Well, if one was facing north and the other facing south, naturally they would be staring one another in the face."

RESULTS.

"Step by Step": The prize of five shillings is awarded to Miss Smith, 12 Lichfield Road, Kew Gardens. Puzzle twinkits, purse-purses, or Royal books of playing cards are to Mr. W. Easton Shorn, 110 Alexandra Parade, Glasgow; Mr. A. Brooke, St Ann's Heath, Virginia Water, Surrey; Miss C. M. Downward, Clayhill House Whitechurch, Salop; and Mr. J. D. Macdougan, St. Catherine's, Liberton, Midlothian.

Five Pounds' Worth: Jones bought 94 articles at 6d., 5 at 10s., 1 at 3s.

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A Pretty Story of a Fateful Telegram

By Mrs. Barré Goldie.

I.

Mrs. Dubois sat back in her luxurious chair, her eyes fixed upon nothing at all, lost in thought.

"Will he come?" Over and over again for weeks past had the words hammered in her brain, until it seemed as if she could never think anything else again.

One year ago, Geoffrey Hedworth had passed out of her life and out of this identical room almost in silence, but in a silence eloquent with meaning. It was just over a year since Eugène Dubois had had the sense to contract typhoid fever, and retire from a world which he was rapidly making worse than he found it, leaving his wife stunned and inert, after the burden of five years' martyrdom beneath his roof.

Left by a pitiless Fate practically alone in the world at the age of eighteen, and lost in innocent terror, she had unhesitatingly given her life into the keeping of a man skilled in the refinements of gilded cruelty, and her five years of married life had been a veritable purgatory. But only during the last six months had the iron entered into the inmost recesses of her soul.

She had met Geoffrey Hedworth, the rising young brain specialist of Harley Street, at some great social function, and from that moment the bitterness of her life had increased tenfold, for she was not one of the women who ask no more of Fate than merely to love and be loved.

Both had behaved well. It was only after some months of constant intercourse that the mutual revelation had come, and then Geoffrey Hedworth had taken a long and much-needed holiday, seeking in the distraction of foreign travel the peace of mind which he had lost, the forgetfulness which all his science failed to teach him could never come.

And then the unexpected happened. Eugène Dubois died, during Geoffrey Hedworth's absence abroad. Once, and once only, did the latter seek out the young widow, some few weeks after the first shock was over. She had stood up, tall and pathetic in her black gown, and had received him almost in silence. He had said very little—only bowed his handsome head over her white hand and thanked her for receiving him.

"I must pass from your life now," he had whispered, "for a time. It must be. But in a year's time—I shall write and ask if I may come into it again. If I may, will you send one line, one word only? If I may not, I pray God you will keep silence, for I could not bear to read my death-warrant."

"In a year, Geoffrey?" she had repeated mechanically.

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"In one year from to-day," he had answered, and then had kissed her hand—a long, slow kiss—and had passed from her presence out into the June sunshine.

To-morrow was the anniversary of the day on which Geoffrey Hedworth had left her, and that was why Leslie Dubois was gazing at nothing at all with her wide-open, grey-blue eyes, seeing with the eyes of her soul.

"Will he come? Will he write?" she kept on mentally asking, the colour glowing deeply beneath her clear skin, by reason of her stress of thought. *Someone* came at that moment, at all events. The door opened, was carefully banged shut again, and a tiny little figure, in a diminutive white sailor suit, precipitated itself over various obstacles about the room, and finally landed in a heap on her knee. In a moment two bronze heads became inextricably mixed, two pairs of soft, crimson lips met in ecstatic kisses, and two pairs of grey-blue eyes laughed into each other's depths.

"Bunny, you've come down at least ten minutes too soon," said Mrs. Dubois severely, at length.

"Bunny mistook de time," said her son unblushingly, as he pulled open the white rosebuds knotted amongst the laces at her throat. Then he wheeled round and gazed fixedly at the tea-tray with its display of dainty cakes, almost untouched. "You's not eaten much cake," he sighed regretfully, and his small thumb slipped pensively into his mouth, a baby trick he had, when confronted by such tragedies as neglected pink and white cakes.

For a few seconds he sucked his little thumb in pensive silence. Then he raised his eyes in mild surprise to his mother's face. Bunny had never known the thumb-trick fail before. Yet there lay the cakes still untouched in their dainty symmetry on the dish, and his mother was gazing apparently through and beyond him—at nothing at all. Slowly Bunny's eyes filled with tears and his little mouth began to droop.

"*Mummy!*" he said at last, in a tone of unutterable reproach.

Mrs. Dubois started and had the grace to flush guiltily.

"Bunny, my *pet*, Mummy was thinking and thinking," and she placed the plate of cakes absently on Bunny's white knees, holding it there whilst he helped himself.

"Oo can go on sinking," said Bunny condescendingly, as he selected two cakes, one chocolate, one pink sugar, and, placing one in each hand, nibbled at them alternately.

Mrs. Dubois laughed.

"Bunny, do you know, perhaps to-morrow will be the happiest day in Mummy's life?" she said, laying her cheek against the soft curls.

"Birfday?" asked Bunny, between bites of cake.

"Yes, no—yes—I think perhaps it *will* be—my 'birfday,'" she answered softly.

"Got a p'esent for Bunny?" he asked, mixing his ideas as well as his cake.

"Oh, Bunny, isn't it poor Mummy's turn for a 'p'esent'?" laughed his mother, twining one of his curls round her finger.

"Oo've dot Bunny," he said reproachfully.

Mrs. Dubois placed her arms around the tiny figure and drew him very close to her.

"Yes, what would Mummy do without Bunny?" she whispered, and the plate of cakes slipped unheeded on to the soft rug at her feet. A moment later, she stood outside the window, with Bunny huddled up in her arms, and gazed at the glory of the June sunlight flooding her garden with generous gold.

But the next half hour was spent in chasing Bunny in and out amongst the rose bushes, as he danced after the belated butterflies, and rolled over and over on the velvet turf till the once spotless white sailor suit had become a pitiful thing, which nurse was too indignant even to comment upon, when she finally tracked the culprits down, half-an-hour after Bunny's bed-time.

II.

"Confound my luck!" muttered Geoffrey Hedworth under his breath, as he placed on his table the telegram of urgent summons which had just been handed to him. A strange remark, considering that the message called him to the bedside of a Cabinet Minister and peer of the realm, whose name was a household word in England. Lord Havorest was at his country seat of Buckhill, a good two hours' journey out of town.

Apparently he had been seized with an epileptic stroke, and the telegram came from an eminent colleague, evidently summoned in hot haste by the local doctor, and who considered that two heads were better than one. At any other time Geoffrey Hedworth would have welcomed the chance of adding to his laurels, for he dearly loved his profession.

But to-day was a marked day—this Wednesday, on which he would as usual see no

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patients after four o'clock. He always gave himself this indulgence on Wednesdays, for the transaction of private and personal affairs for which he had no time on other days.

To-night he had meant to write to Leslie Dubois—a letter which he had already written and rewritten mentally hundreds of times during the past year—a letter on which his whole happiness and future peace would hang. Consequently, it was most inconsiderate of Lord Havorest to choose this particular day on which to have a stroke, and "Confound my luck!" muttered ungrateful Geoffrey Hedworth. Nevertheless, the summons could not be disregarded, and the fateful letter must be written somehow during the day, in the train, or after arrival at Buckhill. But he got no chance to write in the train, for a loquacious patient of bygone days joined him in his carriage, and never ceased talking from Paddington to Buckhill.

At six o'clock in the evening of that day Dr. Hedworth sat by the bedside of his distinguished patient, exactly as he had sat for three hours past. His fingers lay lightly on Lord Havorest's left wrist, his eyes fixed upon his watch. The seconds ticked away, and with them ebbed the life of the old man who lay with closed eyes and ashen face.

Presently the local doctor entered with the specialist first summoned. Geoffrey Hedworth rose, laying the thin, blue-veined hand of the patient gently back upon the bed. In silence the three men passed from the room, after a last whispered word with the nurses. There was nothing more to be done, and it was useless for Dr. Hedworth to wait.

An hour later, as he entered the train at Buckhill to return to town, he realised that the last post had gone, and that it was too late to write to Leslie Dubois that night. To reach Cotherstone, where she lived, letters must be posted before six, and there was only one delivery in the morning in the simple country village.

Geoffrey Hedworth felt intensely upset. Since his arrival at Buckhill he had not been able to leave Lord Havorest for a moment, though all his efforts to save his life had proved unavailing. And now, Leslie Dubois would find no letter awaiting her on the anniversary of the day on which he had left her with a pledge of fidelity. But would she care? Would she have remembered? Would she look out for his letter? Yes, a thousand times yes, or a pair of grey-blue eyes had spoken falsely, another woman proved inconstant.

Thank God he could telegraph—only, he had *said* a letter, he had *meant* a letter, and she, if she cared, would suffer keenly for a little time, until his telegram could reach her.

"To cause her one moment's pain—to let her think me false even for five minutes!" he muttered again and again as he tossed that night on his bed, wearied out by the overstrain of his anxious and unavailing efforts at Buckhill, by the uncertainty of what the morrow might bring.

Before he had finished dressing next morning he summoned his manservant, and gave him a telegraph form on which he had written simply the words:

May I come? Geoffrey.

"Shall I pay the reply, sir?" asked Grellet.

"No," replied Dr. Hedworth with such emphasis that the man retired astonished.

"If I may not, I pray God you will keep silence," he had said, "for I could not bear to read my death-warrant."

"So be it," he thought. "Now let me possess my soul in patience," and he went down to his breakfast with little or no appetite, forgetting as he studied the miraculously early announcement of Lord Havorest's death in the *Morning Post* to do justice to the *omelette aux fines herbes* which his cook had sent up.

That morning, Dr. Hedworth's patients found him unusually silent, unusually *distrait*, and put it down to disappointment at his failure to save the life of the late Foreign Secretary. For the hours dragged on and on, and no answer came from Leslie Dubois.

III.

Bunny felt aggrieved.

He always went out very early with his mother on these glorious summer mornings—into the garden to pick the fresh flowers for the vases. At half-past eight punctually Nannie always handed him over, and it was very nearly the happiest hour of Bunny's day, running riot amongst the dew-laden roses, a pair of very blunt-pointed scissors in his little hands, with permission to chop off the heads of all the dead ones.

But this morning, Mummy had just kissed him as if she did not know she were doing it, and her cheek was cold and white. And then, just when Bunny's attention had been diverted for a moment by the episode of Nannie's tumbling on her nose as she hurried upstairs to her duties, Mummy had walked out by the garden door, straight, and white,

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and silent, and had not even noticed that Bunny was not with her.

Bunny stood alone in the hall for a moment, a prey to mingled emotions of amazement, fury, and despair. Then he turned on his little heel, and, with his small nose very much in the air, trotted out of the house, not out of the garden entrance, but out through the front door, and round towards the stables, where he was forbidden to go unattended.

Mrs. Dubois had taken her basket and scissors in her hand quite mechanically, but she walked on and on down the flower-bordered paths, unseeing and unheeding, her face like a mask beneath its coronal of red-bronze hair. Away from the eyes of prying gardeners, anywhere to be alone with her thoughts, her shattered dream.

"He will not come, he will not come," she moaned.

At length, in an old, disused summer-house, half-screened by kindly creepers, she sank down and flung her arms forward on the rustic table. Lower and lower her head sank, until it lay cradled in her arms, and all was still.

"He will not come, he will not come," she moaned.

Meanwhile Bunny was beginning to feel distinctly bored. Everybody seemed to be too busy to attend to him. The coachman was in the saddle-room, the groom was in the stables, and nobody invited him to linger, because they knew he ought not to be there. Disconsolately Bunny stood in his blue smock, and sucked his thumb desperately.

Suddenly, down the back drive he espied —yes, it *was* the scarlet bicycle of a telegraph boy whirling along. This was interesting, and Bunny established himself upon the low step of the side door which was open behind him, and awaited the advent of the messenger. With great dignity he held out a very chubby little hand for the telegram, as soon as the boy dismounted. He had often watched Frank the footman take in

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telegrams, and Bunny felt that he knew a thing or two.

Joe Burrows hesitated. He was newly-engaged at the village post-office, and had not received instructions about delivering telegrams to small boys with copper-coloured curls and blue smocks. Beyond, through the open door, he caught sight, or thought he did, of a print skirt. Surely it would be all right, and someone was in close attendance upon little Master Copper-Curls.

So he handed over the telegram with a grin. Bunny disappeared for a brief moment. This business must be properly conducted, just as he had seen it conducted when his mother received telegrams. He paused behind the door for a moment and then reappeared, the unopened telegram still clasped in his hand behind his back.

"Dere's no answer, telegwarf boy," he said gravely.

Joe Burrows nodded, mounted his bicycle, and was off in a twinkling.

Bunny's face was wreathed in smiles. This was splendid. A *real* telegram. Now he could play at "telegwarf boy." For some minutes he trotted up and down the stable-yard, leaving his telegram on imaginary people at imaginary houses, talking busily to himself, lost in delight.

Channing, the coachman, crossed the yard once or twice and nodded and smiled at him, wondering why Bunny had been turned loose, so to speak, without his natural guardians. Suddenly Bunny grew tired of his game, and looked round for fresh interests. His big, grey-blue eyes fixed themselves on the hay-loft up there, over the stables. Could he, *dared* he, climb the flight of wooden steps which led up to the fascinating little door in the wall? To stand on the tiny platform, high, high up there—why, he would be Jack and the Beanstalk, of course!

Thrusting the telegram deep into the pocket of his little blue blouse, under his smock, Bunny commenced his ascent, slowly, cautiously, and with many pauses. Not a soul saw him. Down below in the stables, he could hear the groom hissing away as he brushed his horses, and Channing was right across the yard in the saddle-room, busy with the harness.

It seemed a long way down to the ground, thought Bunny, when half-way up. Perhaps it would be better to finish the rest without looking down—it made him rather dizzy. Still, Jack got to the top of the Beanstalk. He wondered if Jack looked down at all—only two more steps—it seemed a long way up. Suppose he fell—one more step, yes, here he was at the top, close to the little platform. But there was nothing to hold to—oh! how giddy he felt—how giddy and funny. Down, down, fell Bunny from the top of the Beanstalk.

And his mother saw him fall, just as she came into the stable-yard to ask if Bunny, poor little, forgotten Bunny, had been seen there.

An hour later, she knelt in agony by his bedside.

"Am I to lose both—Geoffrey and Bunny? *Oh God! Oh God!* Spare me this!"

But Bunny never moved or opened his eyes.

"There is only one man who can perform this operation—successfully," said Dr. Griffiths, towards afternoon.

"His name—oh! tell me his name," gasped Leslie Dubois with white lips.

"Geoffrey Hedworth," replied the doctor.

There was a brief pause. So great was this woman's love for this man that for a short moment her pride dominated her overwhelming anxiety about her boy. Was she, indeed, to drink the cup to the bitter dregs—to summon this man who had refused to come, who had played her false, who had never written or made any sign? But it was only for a moment that she hesitated.

"Send for him at once," she said, and Dr. Griffiths marvelled to see that her face could grow whiter yet.

"There is undoubted fracture of the skull, but once this tiny piece of bone is removed and the pressure released," he murmured sympathetically, as he wrote out a telegram.

But Leslie Dubois had returned to her vigil at Bunny's side, to watch his strange, white little face, and to pray.

Geoffrey Hedworth came immediately in response to Dr. Griffiths' telegram. It was late at night before he could arrive. He was met by his country colleague, who rapidly placed him in possession of all details as to the time, place, and nature of Bunny's accident.

"It happened, then, about half-past nine this morning?" the specialist inquired again, somewhat to Dr. Griffiths' surprise.

"Yes, I gather so," he replied.

A wild hope shot through Dr. Hedworth's heart that in Bunny's accident might lie the explanation of the unanswered telegram. Yet—half-past nine? He knew his telegram must have been delivered by a quarter to nine at the latest. And when he met Mrs. Dubois, she gave him not the slightest clue. She

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barely touched his hand in greeting. She was deathly pale and evidently intensely anxious. It was a strange coming—on this day of days. He had not seen her for a whole year—and how he loved her, and how his heart ached with longing to take her in his arms and whisper words of consolation and hope. Instead of that, he was compelled to become intensely professional.

The next few hours were a nightmare of horror to Leslie Dubois. Bunny's little life hung in the balance, and she might not even see the weighing. She received, as in a dream, the nurse Dr. Griffiths fetched, thought of everyone's comfort, watched and waited in her flower-filled drawing-room, through the long, horrible hours of the exquisite summer night.

"I have performed the operation, Mrs. Dubois. It is quite successful."

It was the quiet voice of Geoffrey Hedworth. She raised her head and gazed at him almost without comprehension for a moment, the first gleam of the dawning day striking coldly on her beautiful, marble face.

"You have—? Oh *Bunny, Bunny!*" she cried in an ecstasy of relief, and fell unconscious at the feet of the man she loved—the man who had saved her boy.

IV.

Three days later, Geoffrey Hedworth stood again at Bunny's bedside. Bunny was doing marvellously. Already his little, white face was beginning to look as usual from beneath his strange, white bandages, and it was well-nigh impossible to prevent him talking.

"I knew he would do well, but he is better even than I expected," Dr. Hedworth said. He was still grave and professional, for Leslie Dubois had said no word of the telegram, and both were conscious of intolerable strain in one another's presence.

Suddenly, the nurse, who had left the room to ask for her little patient's soup, returned, holding in her hand a much creased and torn telegram, which she gave to Mrs. Dubois.

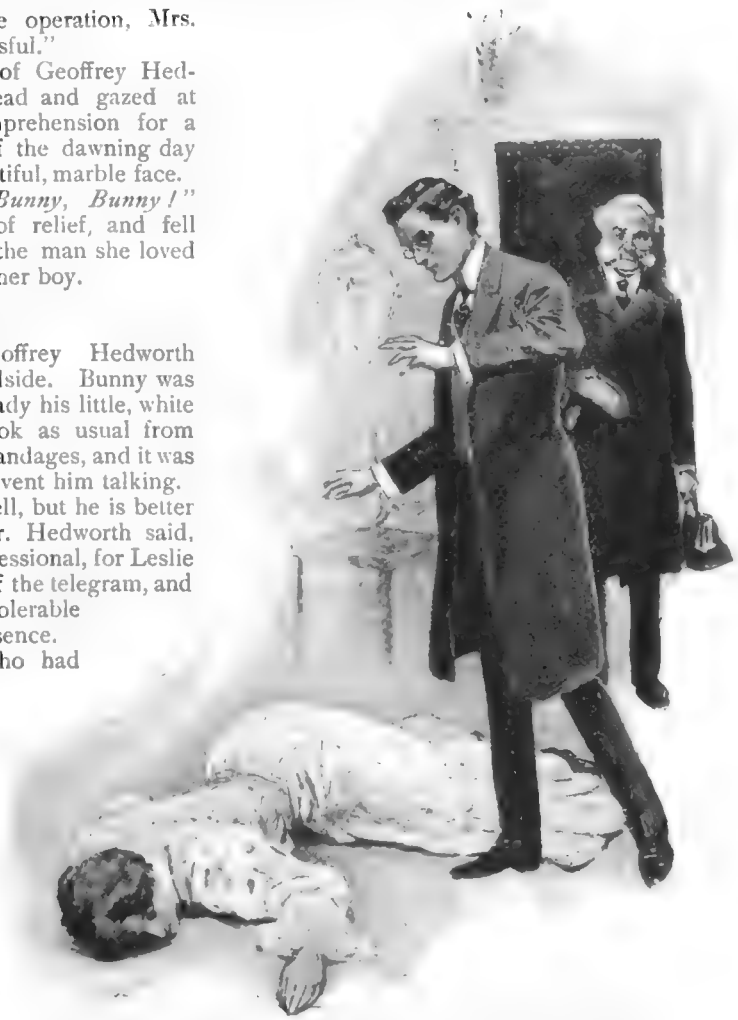
"Nannie says she has just found this in Bunny's blouse—the one he wore on the day of his accident. It appears never to have been opened, Mrs. Dubois," she said, leaving the room again.

Leslie Dubois opened the telegram with fingers that trembled. Smoothing out the flimsy pink sheet, she read the brief message:

May I come? Geoffrey.

From outside came the faint sound of wheels. Dr. Griffiths was coming up the drive, to meet his distinguished *confrère* once more in consultation, at the bedside of the little convalescent. From the landing outside the sickroom sounded the faint jingle of spoon and cup.

But Leslie Dubois and Geoffrey Hedworth were lost to all sense of time and sound, for they were gazing deep into one another's eyes in amazed comprehension.



She . . . fell unconscious at the feet of the man she loved—the man who had saved her boy.

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Photo Gustav Stephan.

LIONEL OVENDEN.

Confessions of Little Celebrities

III.—MASTER LIONEL OVENDEN ("BINO").

Among Many Musical Prodigies, Lionel Ovenden is the Only English Child. He is Equally Wonderful as a Violinist and a Pianist, and Created quite a Furore when He Gave Recitals Lately at the Queen's Hall and the Crystal Palace.

I THINK I really ought to begin my confessions by saying that I am not so very little after all; indeed, for a boy of twelve I am considered fairly tall.

I was born on December 21st, 1893, at Worthing, of which town my father was once mayor, and as my mother came from Brighton, I suppose I may consider myself quite a native of Sussex, though, to be sure, my father is a Devonshire man. Anyhow, I know Sussex very well indeed, and I think it is one of the loveliest of English counties.

I suppose I had better explain first of all how a thoroughly English boy such as I am came to receive so foreign-sounding a name as "Bino." I have often been asked that question, and as the story is rather comical perhaps I had better tell it now.

Well, one evening, a very long time ago, when I was really little and certainly not a celebrity, my father gave a dinner party at his house. After dinner, when the gentlemen were enjoying a smoke, my father found that he had forgotten to put out some special kind of cigars which he particularly wanted his friends to try. As these cigars were kept upstairs my father asked his friends to excuse him for a moment while he went to fetch them. Crossing the hall he proceeded to climb the stairs, which, I ought to say, were only dimly lighted. He had got about half-way up when, on the landing above and in front of him, he suddenly caught sight of two fiery orbs which seemed to belong to some wild animal, or at least to a cat. For a moment my father was quite startled: then he set to work to discover the owner of the eyes, and to his astonishment found that they belonged to me!

As I am writing my confessions I must, of course, be quite straightforward, so I confess that I had crept out on to the landing in order to get a sly peep, if possible, at whatever the "grown-ups" were doing downstairs! My father's unexpected journey to the top of the house had led to my discovery, and also to that of my nickname, for, on returning to the dining-room, my father told his guests about his adventure with the eyes, and one of the gentlemen immediately asked if I were an albino. Of course, I am *not* an albino, and my eyes are *not* red and fiery; but "Bino," nevertheless, I have been called ever since by my relations and closest friends.

I was about five years old when I began to study music, or, rather, when I began to teach myself the piano, for I did not have any lessons till I was seven. It is rather curious, I think, though it is quite true, that at first I did not make very great progress with the piano. However, I practised hard, and, as I am very fond of piano-playing, the day came

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at last when I seemed to have mastered the instrument all of a sudden.

I remember how surprised my mother was that day. She had sent me to practise my pieces, and after a time she heard someone playing whom she took to be a stranger, but it wasn't. After this I had no further difficulty as far as the piano was concerned.

Now that I have said so much about myself—far more than I care about, though I suppose that can't be helped in writing "confessions"—I would like to mention that I am not the only musical member of our family, for I have two brothers who play the piano remarkably well. One is fifteen years old, and the other five, and I am very proud indeed of them.

I have sometimes been asked whether I prefer the piano or the violin. I always give the same answer: "I love both equally." Some of my friends have suggested that I should give up one instrument and devote myself altogether to the other, but I couldn't possibly do that.

Of course, to play two instruments means a good deal of hard work, but, though I practise on the violin for about three hours every day, and on the piano for two hours, it never seems like work to me. Indeed, it is more of a pleasure, and I would practise even harder if I had not so many other things to do, such as lessons with my tutor, and, of course, my outdoor recreations. Speaking of recreations reminds me that I am very fond of outdoor sports. Though I am not very good at cricket—I have not had many opportunities of playing—I am very keen on tennis, and I enjoy nothing better than a few sets after finishing my music practice for the day.

Thanks to the lovely weather of this summer, I have been able to indulge in my favourite pastime to my heart's content, and I really could not say how many hard games I have played with Mr. Gustav Stephan, my violin professor, to whom I owe so much.

Next to tennis, I think I like boxing best. In fact, I am so fond of it that many of my friends shake their heads when they see me put on the gloves. I don't mean that they fear ill-treatment from me, but they are just a wee bit afraid that I may break a finger joint, or sprain my hand in some way, which, of course, might be a serious thing for me. However, I spar very carefully, and though I have had many hot bouts I have so far come through quite safely. I think boxing is a splendid exercise, and I should be sorry to have to give it up.

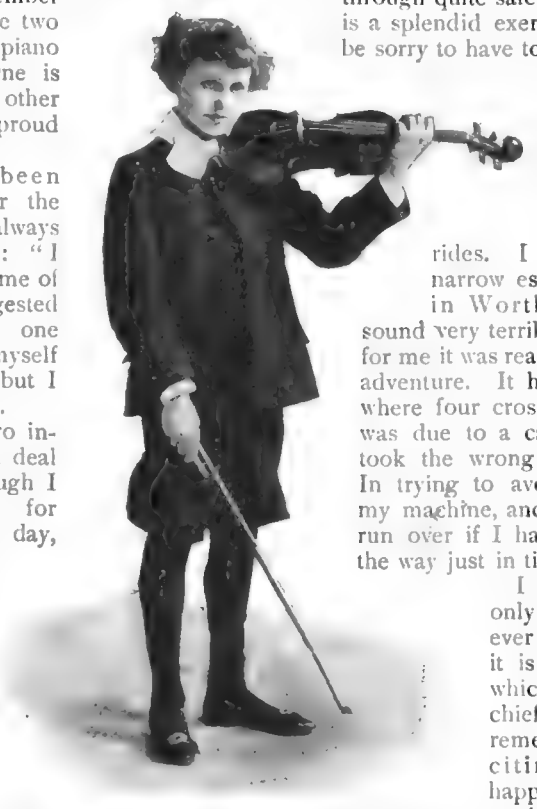

Photo *London Stereoscopic.*

Lionel Ovenden is not only a wonderful pianist; he has gained world-wide fame as a violinist as well.

I am also very fond of cycling, and sometimes take quite long spins; but as a rule I content myself with fairly short rides. I once had a very narrow escape when cycling in Worthing. It doesn't sound very terrible, I dare say, but for me it was really quite an exciting adventure. It happened at a spot where four cross-roads meet, and was due to a careless driver who took the wrong side of the road. In trying to avoid him I fell off my machine, and should have been run over if I hadn't rolled out of the way just in time.

I think that is the only adventure I have ever had; at any rate, it is the only one in which I have taken the chief part, though I remember a very exciting thing which happened when I was staying in a little country village in Sussex. This time, I am glad to say, I had very little to do with what happened, for the cause of the excitement was a madman who, having somehow or other got hold of a sword, went rushing all over the place looking for someone whose head he might chop off. Fortunately no one was hurt; but it was a long time before the man was captured.

Another favourite amusement of mine in the summer is sea-bathing, but I am sorry to say that I have not yet learnt to swim. I mean, however, to have lessons as soon as

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possible, for I have heard so much lately about the clever things a good swimmer can do in the water.

In spite of studies and outdoor amusements, I manage to do a good deal of reading. In fact, I am so fond of reading that very often I have to be almost driven away from my books. I have read most of Scott's works, nearly the whole of Dickens, and almost all of Shakespeare's plays. It is one of my greatest delights to pass a wet afternoon indoors with one of these works for company; and, if I tire of this, there is my master's musical library into which I love to dip. It is, of course, always being added to, and when my search is rewarded by the discovery of some fresh musical treasure I think I really must be at that moment the happiest boy in England.

Photo Florence Collings.
Lionel Ovenden in his garden.

I must not forget to mention, by the way, that I have been for a very long time a reader of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, and that I take a particular delight in Mr. X.'s pages. I am ever so fond of puzzles and "mysteries" of every kind; no wonder, then, that I have a great admiration for clever Mr. X.

Besides attending to my musical studies I have, of course, "ordinary" lessons to do as well. I have a tutor every day for a couple of hours, and we get through quite a lot of work together in that time. I am very fond of geography, but arithmetic —well, I may as well confess that I don't like it! French and German are much more to my taste, and I mean to persevere till I can speak both of them without difficulty. In my spare time — for of course I *do* have a few idle hours now and again—I generally compose something; that is, if I feel in the mood for it. Altogether I have composed more than fifty pieces. Some of the first things I ever did I called Pianoforte Finales, though they were really not Finales at all; but at that time I did not know the proper names to be given to different compositions. I think my best pieces are an Impromptu in F sharp, a Polonaise in G, and an accompaniment to two little songs, the words of which were specially written for me by Mr. Gordon Meggy. Speaking of songs reminds me that I am sure it must be far more difficult to write the words of a song than to compose the music. At any rate, it seems so to me.

Photo Florence Collings.
One of his favourite pastimes is boxing.

One thing I must not forget to mention, and that is that a good memory has been a very great help to me indeed. I very rarely forget a composition that I have once learnt. But a good memory alone is not sufficient to make a good player. You must have a good teacher also, and it was a lucky day for me when I was placed under Mr. Gustav Stephan, of the Guildhall School of Music. He has been my only teacher since I began to learn the violin when I was nine years old.

I am not at all ashamed of my last confession, and it is that, as an English boy, I am especially fond of English compositions. I always like to include in my performances the works of some English composers, such as Sir Edward Elgar, Arthur Hervey, and H. S. Ryan.

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MR. GOUGH'S GOOSE CHASE

A Christmas Story.

By C. Malcolm Hincks.

Despite the contrary predictions of the weather prophets, the Christmas weather threatened to be of the old-fashioned and almost forgotten variety.

Christmas Eve had dawned with a hard frost on the ground and a steady if rather light fall of snow.

Mr. James Gough was slowly eating his breakfast and meditatively gazing at the small flakes as they came against the window of his cosy little suburban parlour, when his wife sharply rapped a teaspoon on her cup.

The little man came to earth at once.

"Yes, my dear?" he said, hastily turning towards her.

Mrs. Gough was a big woman, with a heavy, stern face, one of those women whom you can never imagine having been "sweet seventeen."

She fixed her eyes sternly upon her husband and regarded him much as a judge would do a particularly hardened criminal.

"James," she said slowly, "please be good enough to stop looking out of the window like a dying duck in a thunderstorm and pay attention to me."

"Yes, my love," said Mr. Gough meekly, putting back on his plate a piece of bacon he was about to convey to his mouth.

"You are aware that my uncle Thomas is to spend Christmas with us?"

Mr. Gough knew, without any great pleasure in the fact, nearly all his wife's relations, but this particular uncle he had never met.

Mr. Thomas Blexter was a bit of a traveller, and a much sought-after man, and up to the present he had never found time to come and see his niece's house or husband.

"Yes, dear, I——"

"Don't interrupt me, James. I was about to say that as my uncle is coming we must see that he is hospitably treated, and therefore arrange for some little extras."

Mr. Gough smiled cheerily, and ventured to remark that he wished uncles came oftener, but he was brought up short by a stony stare.

"Therefore, James," continued Mrs. Gough solemnly, "I am about to intrust you with a commission."

Mr. Gough started.

"My uncle's favourite dish is a goose, and that bird being particularly suitable for the occasion, we will have a goose for our Christmas dinner. I have made inquiries about here, but without a satisfactory result, and therefore you must bring a bird back from the City with you to-night. Come straight back here, for uncle may arrive any time this afternoon."

"Yes, dear; but how about the other things? Fruit, wine, and——"

"I will attend to that," said Mrs. Gough decidedly. "Two shillings' worth of mixed fruit and nuts from Harvey's, a bottle of shilling sherry from——" Mrs. Gough broke off on noticing the clock. "Why, James, you booby, not finished breakfast yet and stopping here talking nonsense when you've only five minutes before your train goes."

Mr. Gough convulsively swallowed an obstinate piece of bread, washed it down

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with a mouthful of hot coffee, and bolted up the street, his wife's instructions about the goose still ringing in his ears.

Mr. James Gough was a nice little man, just on the wrong side of forty. Like most henpecked men, he was extremely good-tempered and unselfish. He was head clerk in a City shipping office, and generally appeared very happy—away from home.

But this Christmas Eve morning he seemed distressed on his way to town. He nodded to one or two casual acquaintances in the carriage, and then retreated behind his paper.

His wife's commission bore heavily on his mind; it was only on very rare occasions that she trusted him to do anything, and he was in deadly fear of making some error in the purchase.

Truly no man feared his wife more than Mr. James Gough did his.

But on reaching the City the little clerk cheered up considerably; there was something in the air, something that made the gloomy streets look more cheerful, something that made men pause in the rush of money-making to greet each other cheerily, that indefinable something—the spirit of Christmas!

Mr. Gough's way to the office took him through Leadenhall Market. He glanced casually at the stalls as he passed them. There were some very fine birds, he noticed with relief, and resolved to call at each shop on his way home and carefully inspect the stock.

Very little work was done at the office that morning. Neither of the principals was in town; the three clerks under Mr. Gough spent the time in alternately decorating their blotters with weird designs, looking at the head clerk and then at the office clock, which an enterprising youth had altered to ten minutes fast early in the morning.

About half-past eleven a visitor arrived in the person of Mr. Jack Chambers, a very junior cousin of Mr. Gough.

He came in a hurry, talked in a hurry, and departed in a hurry.

"Awfully sorry, old man—usual tale—dashed hard-hearted tailor cleared me out. Fare down to governor's place ten bob—not a cent—be my good angel again and let me have the money till next Saturday."

Mr. Gough expostulated mildly, then brought out his purse—it contained exactly thirty shillings. The rest of his salary, with the addition of a handsome Christmas present from the firm, he had handed to his wife the previous evening.

"Let me see," he said, slowly gazing at the money while the young man kicked his heels together impatiently, "I've got to have lunch, get a little present for my wife and that pipe. Yes, I think I can do it, John."

Two minutes later Mr. Chambers departed the richer by half-a-sovereign.

But Mr. Gough had forgotten about the goose!

At half-past twelve he donned his hat and overcoat, and after wishing the clerks a merry Christmas, he went out to have lunch, do his shopping, and go home.

Five minutes after his departure the clerks were about to leave. As they were going out of the door, leaving the office in charge of a charwoman who was evidently under the influence of the spirit—or spirits—of Christmas, a telegraph boy arrived.

"Mister Gough?" he asked.

"He's gone home."

"Shall I leave this 'ere?" asked the boy.

The clerk who had first spoken hesitated.

"Perhaps I'd better open it," he said; "it's probably something connected with the office."

He tore open the envelope, and then with a grin walked over to Mr. Gough's desk and laid the telegram on it.

"It's a domestic affair," he said carelessly; and then the clerks went out to celebrate Christmas by having an unusually good lunch.

The message lying unheeded on Mr. Gough's desk was this:

Don't buy goose. Uncle wires he is bringing one.
ANNA.

* * * * *

On leaving the office, Mr. Gough went to his usual lunching place, indulged in several little luxuries, including a half bottle of Chablis. His lunch cost him three shillings, and he bestowed a shilling upon the waiter.

Then he got in a 'bus and went to Regent Street, where he purchased a pretty little brooch for a Christmas gift to his wife. This cost him half-a-guinea.

At three o'clock he emerged from an Oxford Street tobacconist's, bearing with great pride a pipe he had long set his heart upon possessing. The whole wealth upon his person now amounted to sixpence in coppers.

He was about to jump nimbly upon a 'bus to return to the City, when he suddenly stopped short in the road as though turned to stone.

He had just remembered the goose!

The joy went out of Mr. Gough's heart, and the cheery smile vanished from his face.

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He . . caught the goose by the neck.

What would his wife say?

The Goughs had always patronised the local tradesmen, except on a few special occasions. There was no dealer in Leadenhall Market, or anywhere else in the City of London, who would give him credit. It was equally impossible to buy a goose sufficient to make a meal for three for sixpence.

Suddenly Mr. Gough realised that to stand like a statue in the middle of Oxford Street at a busy part of the day arouses considerable curiosity, and he turned hastily and fled from the small crowd that had been regarding him with great interest from the pavement.

Then, as he walked miserably and almost aimlessly along the street, he suddenly thought of a possible escape from his predicament.

A friend and neighbour of his had a photographic studio in the Strand; no doubt he would be able and willing to lend the amount required.

Mr. Gough spent one of his six pennies on a 'bus to his friend's studio, only to find that that gentleman had gone home about midday.

In his perplexity the unfortunate shipping clerk explained his troubles to an aged and garrulous housekeeper.

The old lady was most sympathetic.

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"'Ain't there nothink you can pop?" she inquired.

"Pop?" said Mr. Gough.

"Yus, pawn; 'ain't you got a watch or anythink wot you can take to uncle's?"

Mr. Gough flushed. Then, thanking the lady for her advice, he hurried down the staircase and out into the street.

By this time it was almost dark, the snow was still falling steadily, and the cold was intense. Those fortunate people who had finished their shopping were hurrying home as quickly as possible.

Mr. Gough longed for a comfortable arm-chair, a cheery fire, a pipe, and something to warm him internally.

But there could be no thought of such bliss until he had secured a goose. He boarded another 'bus and travelled to the City.

He might have followed the old housekeeper's advice on the pawnbroker question but for the fact that his wife had made him leave his watch at home, fearing pickpockets in the Christmas rush.

For a quarter of an hour he paced miserably up and down Leadenhall Market, eyeing with great longing the fine birds displayed to view. Once he was tempted to pick one up and chance getting away with it; but after a moment's thought he abandoned it, both on moral and discretionary grounds.

Then at last, feeling hopeless and miserable, he walked towards the station; for there was no help for it, he would have to brave the matter out.

A martyr going to the stake would have been an extremely cheerful person in comparison with Mr. Gough.

He was rather late for his train, and jumped into a second-class compartment just as it was on the point of starting.

There was one other passenger, a portly old gentleman, who had already dropped into a gentle doze.

There were a bag and one or two parcels on the seat beside him, and on the rack above his head a particularly fine specimen of a goose!

Mr. Gough's eyes were attracted to the goose with a peculiar fascination, they never left the bird on the rack, and the owner slumbered peacefully on.

The train was an express one to Mr. Gough's suburban station; he and the owner of the goose were the sole occupants of the carriage. A great temptation assailed the soul of James Gough.

By the time the train was within five minutes' run of his station, Mr. Gough had yielded; his fear of his wife had conquered his better instincts.

He drew out his pocket-book, tore out a sheet of paper and began to write with trembling fingers. Then as the train started to slow up, he took one glance at the sleeping man, put the note on the seat beside him, caught the goose by the neck, cautiously opened the door, and jumped on to the snow-covered platform.

He nearly broke his legs in the jump, but joy filled his soul; he had so far escaped unobserved with the precious goose.

There were two exits from the station—the principal one through the booking office at the other end of the platform, the other down a staircase close to where he had jumped; this one was the nearest way for him to get home.

He was down the stairs and into the street before the sleepy ticket-collector had left his box, and in three minutes he presented himself at the front door of his home.

Mrs. Gough opened the door, and her face when she saw the goose that her husband proudly held forth was a study.

"Y—you've brought a g—goose!" she spluttered.

"Yes, love," said Mr. Gough meekly. "You asked me to this morning."

"Asked you to this morning!" shrieked Mrs. Gough, half hauling him into the hall and banging the door. "But I telegraphed telling you not to get one."

The little clerk gasped, and sank weakly into the hall chair.

"I—I never got it."

"You're an idiot, James. What time did you leave the office?"

"About half-past twelve. I had some shopping to do."

"Shopping! yes, this is some of your shopping. Now uncle will be here in a minute or two with another goose, and—but there, what's the good of talking to you? Go and make yourself respectable, do, before uncle comes. I'm expecting him every minute."

The angry lady seized the goose and flounced off to the kitchen.

Mr. Gough went up to his room, and prepared to change into his dress clothes, which had been laid out on the bed for him. His brain was in a whirl.

He dimly realised that his wife's uncle was bringing a goose for them, and he had deprived some respectable citizen of a bird which, after all, his wife did not want.

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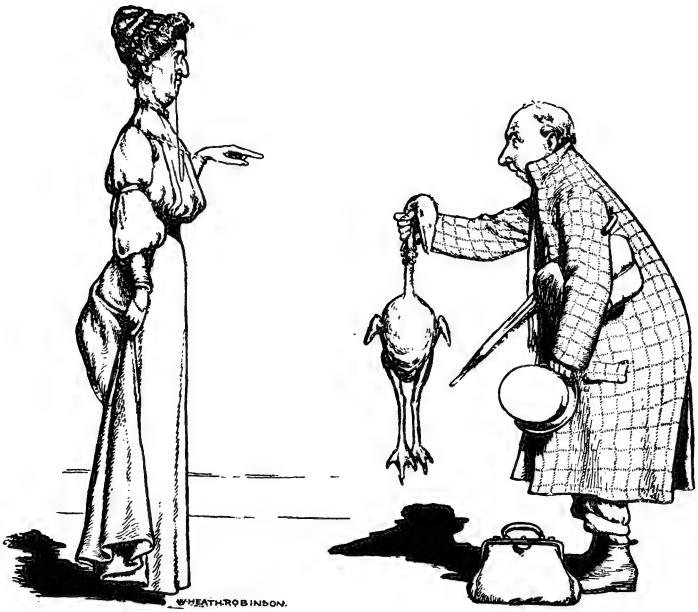

"You're an idiot, James. What time did you leave the office?"

But what could he do?

He was still sitting on the bed, engaged in trying to solve the problem, when it suddenly dawned upon him that he was supposed to be dressing for dinner. He had nearly completed the operation when the front-door bell rang violently, and the next moment he heard his wife greeting her uncle.

Mr. Gough finished dressing quickly and hurried downstairs. He was anxious to make a good impression, for Mr. Blexter was reputed to be wealthy, and Mrs. Gough was his only niece.

Reaching the parlour door the little clerk paused for a moment to arrange his tie for the sixth time, and then quietly entered.

"Oh, here's James," said Mrs. Gough. "James, my uncle, Mr. Blex—— Why, whatever's the matter with you?"

Mr. Gough had staggered back, and was staring helplessly at the portly form of Mr. Blexter.

His wife's uncle was the man whose goose he had stolen!

"Don't you feel well?" asked the astonished old gentleman.

"Y—yes," replied Mr. Gough, recovering himself with an effort. "Just a passing faintness, that's all."

"That's right; coming from cold to heat sometimes affects me that way, but it don't last. I was just telling Anna when you came in that I had been the victim of an impudent theft."

"Yes," said Mr. Gough weakly, seeking refuge in a big chair rather in the shadow.

"Yes, James," broke in Mrs. Gough. "Uncle has been robbed of the goose he was bringing us, so it is a good job you did buy one."

Mr. Gough again muttered something in a faint voice.

"Yes," said Mr. Blexter, "but I like the chap's cheek. I must have been dozing a bit,

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and was only woke up by the porter bawling something into my ear. I found I had gone on to the next station. Then I got my bag and parcels together, but the goose had vanished from the rack, and on the seat I found this bit of paper. Listen!

SIR,

Owing to most untoward circumstances I am appropriating your goose. For the moment I find myself without the necessary amount to purchase one, and as it is most important I shall take one home to my wife, I am taking yours. If you are a married man with a nagging wife you will understand.

Please call any day next week at the office of Spear, Bow, & Co., shippers, Leadenhall Street, E.C., and the amount you claim for the bird will be paid you by the housekeeper.

"Spear, Bow, & Co.!" shrieked Mrs. Gough. "Why that is James' firm. James, is this an extraordinary coincidence, or what? Uncle, please let me see the note."

Mr. Blexter, after a glance at Mr. Gough's pale face, was hurriedly slipping the note back in his pocket, but his niece caught sight of two or three words, and that was enough.

In a voice awful with solemnity she spoke to the erring little clerk.

"James, you are a thief. It is you who stole Uncle's goose, and forced it on me as one you had purchased. You have deceived Uncle, and you have deceived me, and you have the impudence to call me"—here Mrs. Gough's voice rose almost to a scream—"you have the impudence to call me a nagging wife!"

Mr. Gough sat dumb before her.

An apparently trivial action has often altered the result of a great battle. A trivial action altered the whole course of Mr. Gough's married life.

As the trembling little man was about to pour out an abject confession to his angry wife, he happened to glance at the portly form of Mr. Blexter. And Mr. Blexter winked. That wink was a tonic to the little, down-trodden man, in the knowledge that he had a supporter, and in the memory of his miserable goose chase he cast off the thraldom of his wife. He rose to his feet, and his voice was firm.

"I don't see that there's any harm done," he said. "Your uncle was bringing the goose to us, and—and I only saved him the trouble of bringing it to the house. If anyone's got to complain it is your uncle, not you.

"With regard to my statement in the note," he added stolidly, though avoiding his wife's flashing eyes, "it's quite true."

Mrs. Gough braced herself up to reply—and what the result might have been if she had been allowed to speak no one can say—but again Mr. Blexter came to the rescue.

"Look here, Anna," he said sharply. "Don't you think you would be better engaged in getting us something to eat. By the way, there's a bottle of whisky in my bag; you might bring it in. James and I are going to have a little smoke and a chat."

For a moment Mr. Gough looked startled. To drink whisky and smoke in the parlour! he would never have dared. Then, as his wife went outside almost verging on hysterics, he saw Mr. Blexter's eyelid twitch again, and he grinned.

That night the two men sat up talking until very late, and Mr. Gough learnt some plain truths from the old man of the world.

But, strange to say, despite the scene on Christmas Eve, that Christmastide was the happiest the Goughs had spent in their very short married life.

Mr. Gough is no longer henpecked. But he has a strange antipathy to geese.

A SAMARITAN IN DISGUISE.

He pulled up sharply as he saw
The constable's uplifted hand.
The latter couldn't understan
Such prompt submission to the law;

And when he brought his note-book out,
And murmured, "Twenty-seven miles
An hour!" the owner's nods and smiles
Proclaimed delight, without a doubt.

"You'll swear to that in court?" The plea
But served to puzzle Robert more.
His muttered, "Well to laugh before
You're fined!" increased his victim's glee.

"I've tried in vain to sell the car,
For eight an hour's her utmost speed,
But now," he cried, "I may succeed . . .
How useful some misfortunes are!"

Leslie Thomas.

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LAWSON WOOD: THE FUNNY MAN

Himself, his Life, and All about Him.

BY THE EDITOR OF THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

"Now Wood, I want you to do me a heading for this article, caricaturing yourself, and embodying the title: 'Lawson Wood: the Funny Man.'"

Thus spoke the Editor.

"But really——"

"The caricature can be as ridiculous as you like."

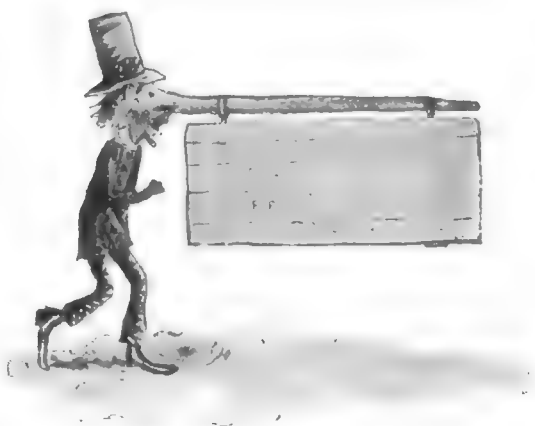
"I don't think——"

"And I want it the day after to-morrow."

Lawson Wood sighed, and resigned himself to the inevitable. Though no longer a member of my staff, he still felt the force of editorial discipline, and the futility of opposing the editorial will. The accompanying sketch is the result of his obedience. It's not merely a good caricature; it's a good portrait. I don't wish to be unnecessarily personal, or to say anything disparaging of Mr. Wood's appearance. What is beauty—in a man? Worse than useless. Mr. Wood's appearance is singularly striking and impressive.

"Do you know," said a young lady to me, after I had introduced her to the famous creator of prehistoric animals, which never existed except in the land of *delirium tremens* —"do you know, I really think Mr. Wood must have designed himself!"

Lawson Wood is a very young man. He assures me that he is seven-and-twenty. I accept his word for it, of course. But somehow I always had an impression that he was several years younger. My mistake. Mr. Wood is, therefore, hardly an infant prodigy, but all the same, twenty-seven is a tender age in which to have made a name, well-known wherever British journals circulate. There



This is the sketch which attracted the attention of Mr. C. Arthur Pearson, when Lawson Wood was about sixteen, and got him a position on the staff of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE.

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Uninvited Critics.

All for the Love of a Lady.

are many young and clever artists in the world; but Lawson Wood is more than that. He is young, clever, and—successful.

Like many men born and bred for a certain profession, Mr. Wood has always sighed for another. His father is an artist, likewise his grandfather before him, and he himself could not possibly have been anything else. It was a no less personage than Nature who put pencil and brush into his hand. But the perverted youth longed to exchange them for a sword.

Family and other reasons—to which, by the way, we, the British Public, owe a debt of gratitude—prevented his entering the Army. Mr. Wood well remembers, on being finally and emphatically informed, while still a boy, that his military aspirations could never be realised, creeping off into a field by himself and weeping very bitterly.

"Even to-day," said Mr. Wood, "I don't know that I shouldn't chuck up my job if I saw a fair chance of getting on in the Army."

Let us hope the fair chance doesn't present itself!

Naturally enough, his first efforts at drawing took the form of military sketches. Mr. Wood has a collection of these juvenile curiosities. Frankly, they are very crude. But now and then one detects indications of the future Lawson Wood—a gesture happily caught and cleverly rendered, a humorous suggestion, a dramatic pose. But neither these early military nor some funny sketches made at the time would strike the ordinary observer as peculiarly promising. Nevertheless, it was just these drawings which gave Mr. Wood his first chance in life.

It so happened that Mr. C. Arthur Pearson lived quite near to the Woods at the time. Some mutual friends interested Mr. Pearson in the artist, who was then a boy of sixteen. He looked at the sketches, one of which particularly seemed to him to show promise, and then and there offered to defray the cost of young Wood's artistic education and to take him on to his staff if he developed sufficient ability, an offer which was gladly accepted.

His foot rested on the first rung of the ladder of fame. For several years he remained here, working in all manner of ways for Pearson's Magazine and The Royal. His labours were not always congenial. When he was yearning to illustrate some stirring battle-story which the powers that be thought fitter to send to his namesake, Stanley Wood, than intrust to his as

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yet unaccustomed hand, he was set, perhaps, to map out an advertisement page.

Humorous tales which he felt were simply crying out for Lawson Wood's sketches were forwarded to Tom Browne, and Lawson Wood was obliged to touch up and arrange photographs for publication.

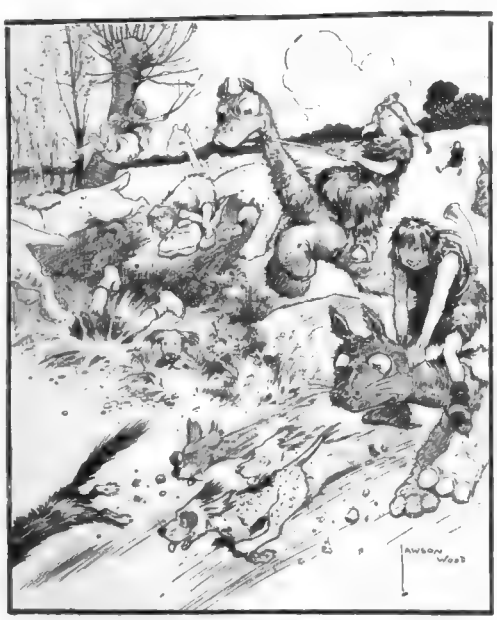
These were his life's little ironies at the time. But, on the whole, he is the first to acknowledge the incalculable value of his training here.

Mr. Wood had all sorts of experiences when illustrating the series "The World Through Other Eyes," for THE ROYAL. This is his idea of himself getting material for a sketch of an infantryman charged by cavalry.

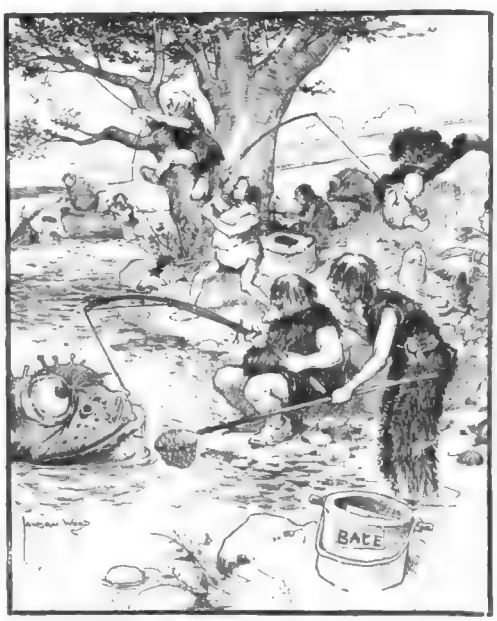
"So many really clever artists fail," he says, "because they never learn what editors and what the public want. This is what I learnt when I was on the staff of THE ROYAL, and without this knowlege I should be nowhere to-day. I was taught, moreover, not to confine myself to one style of work. I was set to illustrate everything that came to hand, from comedy to tragedy, from the battlefield to the boudoir. And the consequence is that I am more or less at home in all branches of illustrating work to-day."

Of course, Mr. Wood is before all else a funny man; it is his humorous work which has made him famous. But some of his other sketches have created no little talk at the time. Take, for instance, those extraordinary pictures of his which accompanied that series of articles which ran with great success through several numbers of THE ROYAL, "The World Through Other Eyes." These articles presented no little difficulty to the illustrator. He had necessarily to put himself into the position of engine-driver, steeplejack, soldier, deep-sea-diver, aeronaut, prize-fighter, orator and workers in many other callings, and to picture the world as it appeared to them when engaged in their peculiar labours. I know of no other artist who could have carried this out so successfully as Lawson Wood.

Whenever he could he trusted to his



A Prehistoric Hunt.



Prehistoric Fishing.

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By permission of "*The Sketch.*"

Straphanging; Force of Habit.

JONES (arriving home after a meeting of his "lodge," to Mrs. J.): "Madam, pleash take my sheat. I'm 'cushtomed t' shtand."

By permission of "*The Sketch.*"

Do You Motor-skate?

Awful predicament of Jones, just back from the Paris show, trying his new motor-skates in the Park. He exceeds the speed-limit, and can't find the brake.

imagination, but in most cases he had actually to become, so to speak, engine-driver, aeronaut, deep-sea-diver, and so on in order to make his pictures accurate. That is to say, he took a night journey from Manchester to London in the cab of an engine; he made an ascent in a balloon; he donned a diver's costume and plunged into the sea; in short, he went through many strange adventures, and the success of the sketches triumphantly rewarded him for his pains.

He tells some funny stories in connection with these exploits. Arriving in London after his expedition in the cab of the engine, he made straight for home. At the door he found he had forgotten to bring his latchkey with him. He rang the bell. The servant opened the door, but fled in fear when without a word he stepped into the hall. Mrs. Wood came on the scene and stared with amazed wrath at the intruder.

Photo Ernest H. Mills.

The latest and most characteristic portrait of Mr. Lawson Wood.

"What on earth's the matter?" he asked.

Wrath gave way to astonishment and laughter on his wife's face. Without a word she led him to a mirror, and there, looking straight at him, he beheld the fearful apparition of a man absolutely without a white spot on his face. So filthy was he that neither his servant nor even his own wife had recognised him.

Mr. Wood had several novel sensations when making his descent into the depths of the sea.

"It required no little screwing up of my courage," he said, "deliberately to walk down the ladder into the water. You must remember that the weight of a diver's outfit is appalling. On dry land you can scarcely stand upright under the load. Under the sea, of course, much of the weight is lessened. I remember when I had arrived on *terra firma* (at the bottom of the sea) my nose began to itch. Instinctively I put up my hand

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"Page 43 says I'm safe because the wind's in the wrong direction."

"Why, the guide-book says this water is swarming with sharks!"

These two sketches, which originally appeared in "The Bystander," illustrate two incidents in the career of Mr. Biff, who travels round the world, and always consults his guide-book in case of emergency.

Random Rhymes.

A Lord who was not a good shot
At a rabbit one day took a pot,
He said: "I mayn't kill
What I aim at—but still
I certainly hit quite a lot."

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A Matter of Choice.

LADY (on Electric Railway): "Conductor, which door do I get out by?"

CONDUCTOR: "Whichever you like, mum. The car stops at both ends."

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to rub it. Of course my fingers came into contact with the glass windows of my helmet. I never felt such a fool in my life!"

Lawson Wood's humour is essentially English—a very different article from American humour, French, Irish, German, or Scotch—if, indeed, the last-named may be said to exist at all. The humour he most delights in is that quiet humour which finds its satisfaction in the little eccentricities of human nature. Smart repartee is not much in his line. He takes also a huge joy in broad, honest fooling and unadulterated nonsense.

When he really lets himself loose perhaps he is one of the funniest of living artists. It is hard to think of anything to equal the mad, rollicking humour of some of his prehistoric sketches.

The majority of his jokes he invents himself. But he is not one of those funny men who sit down at a given time and for a given time, and resolutely manufacture stuff for laughter. His keen sense of the ridiculous and lively imagination suggest ideas at any odd moment.

To take an instance. Returning home one evening on the District Railway, he was compelled to form one of the numerous band of "strap-hangers"—with no little personal discomfort, for he was loaded with several parcels. On entering his home his already somewhat ruffled temper was scarcely improved by striking his head against the hall lamp.

Mrs. Wood, who happened to be present, says he made a remark which she positively declines to repeat.

All at once, however, a light broke across the clouds on his face. His sense of humour had got the better of his ill-temper, and the idea for what he considers his most popular picture suddenly flashed across his mind. The drawing is reproduced on page 546.

Mrs. Wood says that it is quite uncanny to watch a joke dawning on him. He falls silent, looks preoccupied, then slowly a grin widens on his face. Sometimes the grin breaks into a long and lonely laugh. If you ask to share in the joke he shakes his head. It's quite a private concern as yet. It has to be quietly considered, matured, imagined, sketched, and printed, before it becomes the property of the British Empire.

By permission of *"The Sketch."*

Origins of Etiquette.

SERVING GUESTS FIRST.—This is one of Mr. Wood's successful series. The guests are supposed to have been served first in case the food was poisoned. In this instance, it evidently was.

By permission *"The Sketch."*

Origins of Etiquette.

LADIES GOING FIRST originated in the 11th century, when assassinations became so frequent that men "encouraged" their wives to precede them in dangerous places.—(*Extract from unpublished history*).

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A Cockney 'Sport'

BY

REGINALD RIGBY

"Oh! won't you come and shoot with
us?"
Said Billy Brown to me:
"The partridges on my estate
Are thick as thick can be."

♡ ♡ ♡

I went, I saw, I shot, but oh!
Those birds were wild and free;
Instead of sitting as I'd hoped
Upon the greenwood tree—

They rose from out the stubble fields,
As fast as fast could be;
They certainly were *very* thick,
(A bit *too* thick for me).

♡ ♡ ♡

I blazed away "into the brown,"
And hit it, as you see,
Unluckily the "brown" I hit
Was William! Woe is me!

♡ ♡ ♡

I shot a dog—a favourite dog—
A haystack and a tree,
The keeper, William, and a lad,
A fairish bag—for me!

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The Love Affairs Of Algy

No. VI.—HIS CHRISTMAS GIRL.

A Complete Story.

By Marcus Woodward.

Among the members of the Christmas house-party at Wainsford Hall, in Kent, were two guests whose names were continually coupled—Miss Sadie Landor and the Hon. Algernon Brightlingsea. For one thing, they were the two motorist members of the party—for another, they appeared to find in their motor-cars a common bond on which to base a most uncommon sort of friendship.

Uncommon, because Miss Landor was not the sort of woman one would have expected to fall in love with the type of man represented by Algy; nor, indeed, was Algy the sort of man to become a victim to a woman of Miss Landor's type. She, in two words, was a New Woman. A champion of her sex, she did mannish things in a wonderfully successful way. She had made records in mountain-climbing, had ascended to great heights in balloons, and her fame as a motorist was wide-spread. Moreover, in all that she did, she appeared to be utterly independent of man's existence. Her chauffeuse was a standing joke of the automobile club honoured by her presidency.

Yet, beyond question, she was attached to Algy.

In a letter dated "December 22nd," she wrote to an intimate friend in these terms:

". . . Among others here at Wainsford Hall is Algy. He is an Honourable—wears an eye-glass—very often stammers when embarrassed—and dresses like a dandy of the old days. Also he drives a motor. He has the reputation of being a terrible flirt, and if the way he ran after me is any criterion, a flirt he certainly is.

"Now, my dear, listen," the letter went on in a burst of confidence. "I'm going to cure the Hon. Algy of flirtations. I look upon it as a duty I owe to my sex. He's not in love with me—not a bit of it—nor am I in love with him. Only so far as will be good for him. It makes me feel like an old mother sheep with a frolicsome lamb. Algy's my lamb, my dear, and follows me where'er I go. At least, he *did*—now I follow him.

"And this is my plot—to give him no peace, but to pester him with my attentions, just as he pesters girls—all in fun—you know. But no half measures. I've made up my mind to teach him, once and for all, that there are some girls with whom he can't play 'Off-with-the-old-love-and-on-with-the-new,' just as his lordship pleases. I'm going to make him suffer for his flirtation by pushing it to its logical conclusion, that is to say, an engagement—no further. This should frighten

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him—to be engaged to a New Woman! Engaged to the Hon. Algy I'm determined to be, and you know, my dear, when I make up my mind I stick at nothing. . . ."

Algy, for his part, did not know whether he was in love with Sadie Landor or not. At first he had thought her his affinity—so strong was their common bond in their motor-cars. He called her his "Christmas Girl," and followed her, indeed, as a lamb follows its mother. Then he had had his misgivings, only to find that to leave pursuing was to become pursued. If he enjoyed the novelty at first, he soon became afraid of this pushful New Woman, regretted his many indiscreet speeches, and wished himself well clear of an awkward entanglement.

So matters stood on the evening of that 22nd of December of Sadie Landor's letter—when it fell to Algy's lot to take his pursuer in to dinner.

What brought his troubles to a definite head was a question raised at dessert by an old Cupid-proof bachelor of the party.

A discussion had been raging fitfully on the subject:—Whether it were better for a young man who could afford to keep either a wife or a motor—but not both at once—to select the one or the other?

"What does Algy say?" the old bachelor had asked, a twinkle in his eye—and all turned to Algy with eager interest.

"For my part," began Algy boldly, "if it comes to a choice between a wife and a motor, give me——"

Here he caught the eye of Miss Sadie Landor, and hesitated.

"Well—wife or motor? Come, Algy, tell the truth."

The old bachelor was insistent. Algy's nerve had shown signs of deserting him under Miss Landor's steady gaze; but he had seen a golden chance to score, and meant to take it.

"For my part," began he again, "g-g-give —me—a m-m-m-otor!"

The words came out with a triumphal stutter, and a roar of laughter greeted the announcement.

"Algy's on the road to salvation," said the bachelor. "He's learning the wisdom of avoiding women's wiles."

But Sadie Landor had no intention that he should learn his lesson so easily, and, soon after dinner had ended, Algy found himself called by her to a reckoning.

They came face to face, by chance, in an empty sitting-room.

"Now, Algy," said Miss Landor, taking him by the buttonhole with one hand, and shaking a warning finger in his face with the other, "what do you mean by scorning my sex? I want an explanation."

"R-r-really," began Algy, in nervous trepidation, but stopped short as Miss Landor laughingly pulled him to a sofa, and forced him, much against his will, to be seated beside her.

"I want to know," she went on, "what you really think about marriage and motors. It's a serious question, Algy. Answer me truly."

But Algy's courage oozed out before the domineering way of the New Woman.

"R-r-really," he stuttered, "I haven't thought about it—and—er—there's nothing to explain—and—er—I didn't mean anything."

"That," said Miss Landor, "is exactly what I imagined. But tell me," she went on, "if in real life it came to a question—*wife or motor*—which *would* you have?"

Algy evaded the straight issue.

"F-f-fortunately for me," said he, "that isn't the question in real life."

"Then," said Sadie Landor, "what is it? You may safely confide in me, Algy. I like you, you know—and I'd be glad to help you out of any difficulty. And, Algy, there's no one about to interrupt us if we talk the subject over."

Algy, looking wildly around, realised to his dismay that this was only too true.

"R-r-really, Miss Landor," he began again, "there *isn't* any question."

"Oh, Algy—but there is. I can tell by your worried expression. Confess—is there not just some little question in your case as to whether it would be better to marry a girl who motored, or a girl who didn't? Isn't that the proposition?"—and his tormentor leant forward, and peered into Algy's face, as though determined to find truth.

And now at last Algy saw his way to make clear his feelings towards his pursuer. He had but to declare he had decided to marry only a girl who didn't motor, and he would be saved.

"Well, I confess, that *is* the proposition," he said. "Whether to fall in love with a girl who motors, or a girl who doesn't."

Thus far he went without hesitation—to have his speech arrested by his fatal habit of stammering in emergencies.

"And—and—the fact is, don't you know—I've decided — quite decided — to — er — aw——"

The intended blow did not fall—for here Miss Landor cut short his halting words.

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"Algy, I know exactly what you want to say, and I'll help you out of your difficulty. What you mean is that you would like to propose to me on the spot. Isn't that so?"

The look of dismay on Algy's face told his answer far better than the stuttered "R-r-really—r-r-really——" that ended in nothingness. Miss Landor went on:

"Don't deny it, Algy. You're in love with me—there's not a doubt about it—New Woman though I be. But this shows your sense, Algy; for there's nothing like a New Woman to help a bashful young man out with a proposal. This is the way she does it. She doesn't wait to be proposed to—she doesn't even trouble to propose herself—she just takes what she wants."

"Please to consider yourself engaged!"

Miss Landor edged close to Algy's shrinking, terrified figure at the end of the sofa.

"I happen to want you, Algy," she said, "and so I've decided I will take you. Please to consider yourself engaged!"

And she leant forward, and doubtless would have kissed Algy without more ado, had not a party of billiard-players, on their way to the billiard-room, trooped, at that moment, through the room.

* * * * *

Algy spent a miserable night, wondering whether or not he were engaged to Sadie Landor—and whether he would like it if he were. Falling at last into a restless sleep, he dreamt that a New Woman ran away with him in a balloon—and when he awoke, his mind was made up that he would escape the New Woman's clutches at all costs.

Eight o'clock in the morning saw him standing on the door-step of the post-office in the little village of Wainsford, waiting for the doors to open. For he had stolen from the house in the chilly winter's dawn, intent on sending a telegram wherewith he hoped to find a plausible solution to his difficulties.

The post-master looked surprised when he handed in his message. It was addressed to his man-servant, Deeds, the guardian of his London flat, and ran thus:

Send to me at once a telegram as follows: Begin "His lordship desires your presence immediately. Urgent family business.—DEEDS." End. Prepare for my return to-night.—BRIGHTLINGSEA.

Deeds, reflected Algy—as he paid for his telegram, and hastened to return to Wainsford Hall—was well accustomed to send such telegrams when his master stood in need of a reason to escape from unenjoyable house-parties. His spirits rose as he thought of the good excuse he would soon have to depart from Wainsford, and he felt he could look Miss Landor in the face again.

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Algy had little idea that Miss Landor had followed in his footsteps to the post-office, or that she, too, had dispatched a telegram containing a message intended, ultimately, for herself.

The answer to Algy's telegram came first to hand, as breakfast was beginning at the Hall.

"By Jove, this *is* bad luck!" he exclaimed, as he read the message which the faithful Deeds had sent to order. "I'm called to Town"—and he handed the message to his hostess.

"Why, Algy, what does this mean?"

"It means the pater's in some sort of a fix," said Algy, "and that I must go to him at once on peril of my life. I expect," he added, "the poor old chap doesn't like being left alone in London for Christmas—but really it's too bad of him, and I'm *awfully* sorry to have to go."

Here Algy looked at Miss Landor, whose face was full of concern.

Remonstrances were poured in vain on Algy's head—he remained obdurate in his decision to leave at the earliest moment. Afterwards, when the answer to Sadie Landor's telegram came to hand, he regretted bitterly that he had insisted so much on the importance of his departure.

The telegram Sadie received read thus:

Please come to Town immediately. Important meeting unexpectedly arranged for to-night. Your presence imperatively required. CENTRAL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION.

"I must certainly go," said Miss Landor. "Algy, we'll have a motor-race to London!"

* * * * *

An hour later the two motor-cars were in waiting, in readiness for the race, at the front door of Wainsford Hall.

The departure of Algy and the New Woman had become a kind of sporting event, and bets were made as to which car would reach London first. But some of the guests looked at the event in a different light, and hints were freely circulated that the two motorists were bent on a runaway match.

Amid the cheers of the entire house-party assembled around the porch, Miss Landor presently sprang into the driving-seat of her car, and with a triumphal blast of the hooter, and a cheery "Good-bye all," shot away down the drive. Algy, five minutes later, amid a babel of banter and cheering, followed in her wake.

The drive made one of four cross roads which met at the Lodge gates. The main road into which it ran led in one direction to London, in the other to the South Coast. Opposite the entrance to the drive a lane led away to a farm. Reflecting on this, Algy, as he sped down the drive, received a sudden inspiration.

"I'll dodge her yet," he muttered fiercely, not a little to the surprise of the chauffeur. And on reaching the main road he turned his car, not to the right, towards London, but to the left, and to the south; and it was with a big chuckle of self-congratulation that he sent the car racing up the white road before him.

"Good-bye to the New Woman!" cried Algy joyfully.

But Sadie Landor, when out on sporting enterprises, always looked far ahead. In her mind's eye she had foreseen this move of Algy's—as she had seen it with her actual eyes from the shelter of the lane into which she had taken the precaution of driving her car on leaving the Lodge gates; and now, in literal earnest, she took up the *rôle* of Algy's pursuer.

He, meantime, went speeding serenely on his way, chuckling often to himself as he thought how cleverly he was escaping. It was not until he had put a good ten miles between himself and Wainsford Hall that his chauffeur aroused his suspicions by remarking:

"Sir, a car is following us."

A familiar white veil, fluttering in the wind, told Algy to whom the car belonged.

"It's the L-L-Landor woman again!" he gasped, and instinctively opened the throttle and put on speed. Then, in his extremity, he began to confide in his chauffeur.

"Look here, Blake," he said, "I'll tell you something. That woman driving the car behind is in love with me. First she began by following me about Wainsford. No sooner did I make an excuse to get away to London than *she* found one. I dodged her at the beginning of the trip, but here she comes, tearing after me. What on earth am I to do?"

Blake, the chauffeur, concealed a grin as best he could.

"Well, sir, I think we can outrun her," he said, "if you'll take the risk."

"I'd risk my neck to escape her!" Algy muttered fiercely.

"Then," said the chauffeur—speaking of the car—"let her go."

And Algy, pulling his cap hard down on his head, acted on the advice. The hand of his speed-recorder showed how the miles

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It bounded down the hill, and leapt, as it were, at the gate.

were flying. From its position at twenty miles an hour it leapt to thirty-five; then onwards to forty, fifty, and fifty-five. Algy held resolutely on his way, and the milestones raced past.

Presently he felt the chauffeur's hand on his arm, and stooped, because of the rush of air, to hear the shouted words:

"A track to the left—running into a wood—turn down there and hide till she passes."

Sadie Landor's own trick!—but neither knew it. Algy slowed down, and turned into a track, and in a moment the trees of the wood hid from sight the main road along which he had been speeding.

When well within the shelter of the wood Algy pulled up. He felt like a hunted fox as he sat with ears strained to catch the sound of the pursuing car on the main road. But he did not have to wait long. Suddenly the chauffeur exclaimed:

"She's hit our trail—she's coming down the track!"

There was no doubt about it. The sound of her engines, instead of passing on and growing beautifully fainter, came momentarily nearer, and grew alarmingly louder. Algy dashed onward into the heart of the wood.

Fast driving now became dangerous. The track narrowed and began to run downhill, and Algy soon saw a precipitous descent before him—while in the far distance a gate blocked the way. Looking back, when halfway down the hill, he saw the car of his pursuer close behind.

"We're done, sir," exclaimed Blake. "If we stop to open the gate she'll catch us for certain."

Algy looked again behind him and looked again towards the gate. It was a flimsy affair, he judged, of hurdles.

"If we can't stop to open it," he muttered, "we'll smash through it." Setting his teeth, he released his brakes. The car gathered speed. It bounded down the hill, and leapt, as it were, at the gate. There was a crash of splintering wood. Part of a hurdle shot into the air and struck Algy on the head. Then came a report like a pistol-shot, the car swerved violently, and came suddenly to a stop against a tree-trunk. Algy, half stunned and wholly dazed, dimly heard Blake crying out about an iron spike having punctured the off-side tyre.

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Staggering from the car, he turned to see Sadie Landor drawing up in the gateway.

* * * * *

"The house to which I am taking you belongs to the village doctor and his wife. The wife is a great friend of mine—the doctor also—he will be able to give you something for your headache. And they will give us some lunch, which I'm sure we've earned, and afterwards you can rest as long as you please. They are charming people," went on Miss Landor. "I'm sure you will like them."

It was not entirely without success that his companion did her best to raise his fallen spirits—and Algy's temper had improved considerably by the time the car drew up at the doctor's house.

A good lunch mended it completely. The doctor and his wife proved more than worthy of Miss Landor's eulogies. Algy's troubles melted like snow beneath a genial sun.

Only on one point did any uneasiness remain. Was he or was he not engaged to Sadie Landor?

With this problem he had an opportunity of wrestling seriously when lunch was ended. The doctor then went forth on his professional rounds, his wife bore her friend Sadie away to the drawing-room, and Algy was left to his own devices. He chose to smoke a cigar in the garden—for the day, though late in December, was bright and warm. Pacing back and forth, he studied the question carefully. True, this New Woman had told him the night before to consider himself engaged. "I happen to want you, Algy," she had said, "and so I've decided I will take you." The words were burnt on his brain. But nothing more had been said on the subject. Surely, then, she must have been joking and he would hear nothing more of it if he said nothing more about it himself.

With these assurances Algy was comforting himself when the doctor's wife came into the garden through a bay window of the drawing-room, and hurried impulsively towards him.

Said the doctor's wife:

"Mr. Brightlingsea, I hasten out to congratulate you!"

Algy's jaw dropped.

"Yes," she went on laughingly, "you may well look aghast—for I've guessed your secret. I gather your engagement *is* a secret, because Sadie wouldn't tell me anything about it. I asked her point-blank: '*Are* you and Mr. Brightlingsea engaged?' She said: 'You must ask Mr. Brightlingsea—I won't tell'; and so I knew at once you *were* engaged. And I congratulate you with all my heart."

The good lady shook Algy warmly by the hand. He, for his part, was stupefied by the shock of her congratulation, and so lost his chance to make anything like an adequate denial.

Despair seized him. The situation was desperate, but one course seemed open—flight, prompt and efficient. Surely if he fled again this terrible New Woman would not again follow; surely she would take so straight a hint about his feelings. His car had arrived, the puncture mended, some time before. From where he stood in the doctor's garden he could see his chauffeur, on the drive, rubbing the mud from the brass-work.

"I'll run for it," said Algy in desperation.

He hastened round the house to his car.

"Quick," he cried to the chauffeur, "start her up again, I'm off in a hurry. I'll show Sadie," he added beneath his breath, "whether I'm engaged to her or not!"

And within a minute of his resolve to fly, he had flown.

Sadie Landor, for her part, did not leave the doctor's house until some hours later. The interim she employed in making certain curious revelations to the doctor's wife, over which they both laughed until they could laugh no longer.

When she departed, it was not for London. She announced that she had abandoned her intended or imaginary mission to Town. Her drive went no further than Wainsford Hall, whose hospitable doors she re-entered with a feeling of triumph.

It was no longer the gay, irresponsible, light-hearted Algy we have known before who drew up presently in St. James's Street. Rather it was a stern misogynist who stepped out from his car.

"Mark my words, Blake," he said, as he dismissed his man, "it's one thing to fall in love with a girl, but when the story reads the other way round"—here Algy paused to give due effect to his words, to which a sudden access of stammering added appreciably—"why—B—B—Blake," he concluded, "it's—er—the—er—very—er—D—D—Dickens!"

And with this, Algy—a chastened man—let himself into his rooms with his latchkey.

THE END.

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Picture Paragraphs.

Readers are Invited to Submit Photographs Suitable for this Feature. Liberal Payment is Made for Accepted Pictures. A Short Description should Accompany Each Photograph.

Photo *Scientific American.*

A motor-sleigh which has a reputed speed of thirty-five miles an hour over snow, and ninety miles over ice.

THE MOTOR-SLEIGH.

A VERY simple and swift solution of the motor-sleigh problem is illustrated above. The sleigh is driven by a four-cylinder air-cooled motor of some twelve horse-power, which causes a wheel termed the "snow-paddle" to revolve.

This wheel has double rows of strong, sharp steel blades which either catch in the snow or cut into the ice, whichever is beneath the sleigh.

The wheel is pressed against the ground by a spring, and can be raised twelve inches above its normal level. As it can also be lowered if required, it has a vertical play of about two and a half feet.

A curved bar armed with teeth can be seen close to the driving-wheel, and this, when pressed into the ground, acts as a brake.

The inventors of the sleigh are Messrs. Temple & Richmond, of Springfield, Ohio, U.S.A. One of these gentlemen is seated on the left of the driver.

The vehicle is fourteen feet long, and is mounted on runners twenty-two inches high. Its weight is 1400 pounds.

It has carried twenty people through snow at eight miles an hour. It has a normal speed of from twenty to thirty-five miles an hour carrying four or eight people; while on ice, ninety miles an hour can be achieved.

A PICTURESQUE RESIDENCE.

ALNWICK CASTLE, where Their Majesties recently honoured the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland with a visit, is one of the stateliest abodes in England. Exterior and interior are exceedingly fine, and the State rooms contain much that is priceless in the way of paintings and tapestries.

The carved work alone at Alnwick has aroused the admiration and envy of connoisseurs. Not only are the mantelpieces carved, but the ceilings also in many of the rooms, and notably in the dining-room, where the picture frames are also heavily carved.

An interesting relic of the days when castles were for use as well as ornament are the stone sentinels over the gateway. These were erected to "draw the fire" of the enemy and lure them on, while the real defenders let fly arrows from a sheltered position.

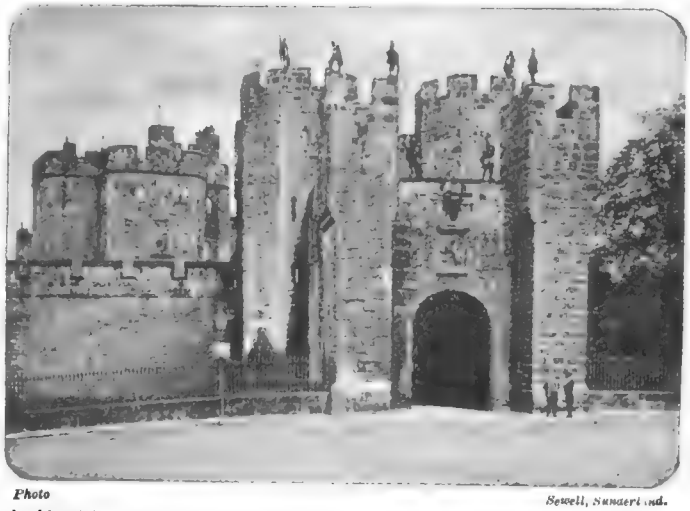

Photo *Sewell, Sunderland.*

At Alnwick Castle, which belongs to the Duke of Northumberland, several stone men are erected over the gate, to frighten away enemies.

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THE KORYAKS AND THEIR HOUSES.

PERHAPS the most peculiar thing about the Koryaks, who inhabit North-Eastern Siberia, is their extraordinary houses. The top of a Koryak abode, besides doing duty as a roof, is used as a storehouse for food, and anything else for which there is no room in the house itself.

Photo *Scientific American.*
The Koryaks, of N.E. Siberia, enter their houses through the roof, by means of a ladder stairway.

This roof slopes downward to a hole in the centre which serves as a chimney, ventilator, and means of communication between the house and the outer world. Logs arranged in a circle support the framework of the roof, and for nine months of the year the house is covered nearly to the roof with tons of snow, frozen earth, and rubbish of all kinds.

The only means of entering one of these dwellings is by climbing up a split log leading from the roof to the ground, and having holes cut in it for the hands and feet. A similar contrivance leads from the hole in the roof to the interior. The house consists of but one room, with an earthen floor, and has no furniture except large copper vessels for cooking blubber and a kettle for melting snow.

Koryak diet consists almost exclusively of fish, and half-cooked seal and whale flesh. Russian brick tea is an occasional luxury. Some thirty to forty people inhabit one of these houses, the atmosphere of which almost kills a European.

A GOAT AND GOOSE THAT WALK ABOUT LONDON.

NOWADAYS many people, especially ladies, keep strange pets. Not content with the usual domestic dog and cat, some have even gone so far as to take a delight in little lizards and other queer creatures.

However, Mr. Eva, the manager of a firm of contractors in the City, has fairly eclipsed the eccentricity of all who have gone before him as regards pets. This gentleman is extremely fond of his tame goose and his four-horned goat. The choice of animals in itself seems strange enough, but Mr. Eva is not ashamed of his taste in live stock. And in order to make this clear, he may often be seen in the Goswell Road and Barbican, taking the air in company with his goat and his goose. Both animals are so well trained that they are not at all embarrassed by being taken for a stroll in the very heart of London.

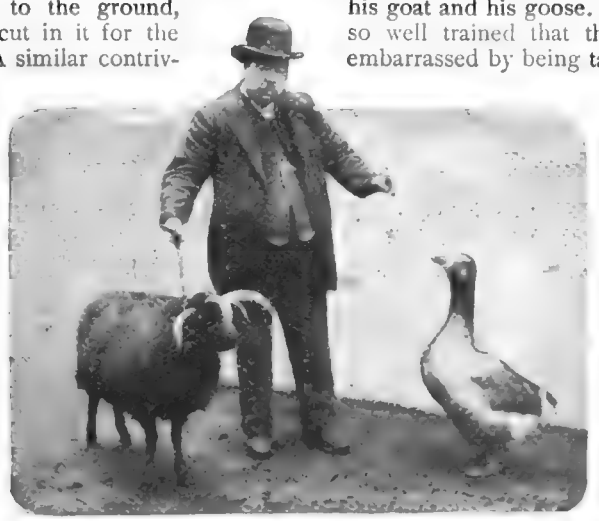

Photo *Percy Hurter.*
Mr. Eva, who is often seen in the City accompanied by his tame goat and goose.

Naturally Mr. Eva is very proud of their excellent behaviour in public, and his neighbours consider that he has achieved no small thing in bringing the education of his pets to such a state of perfection. In fact, he is known locally as "Jamrach's rival."

Many British regiments have queer animals as mascots, the best known instance being the familiar goat of a certain Welsh regiment.

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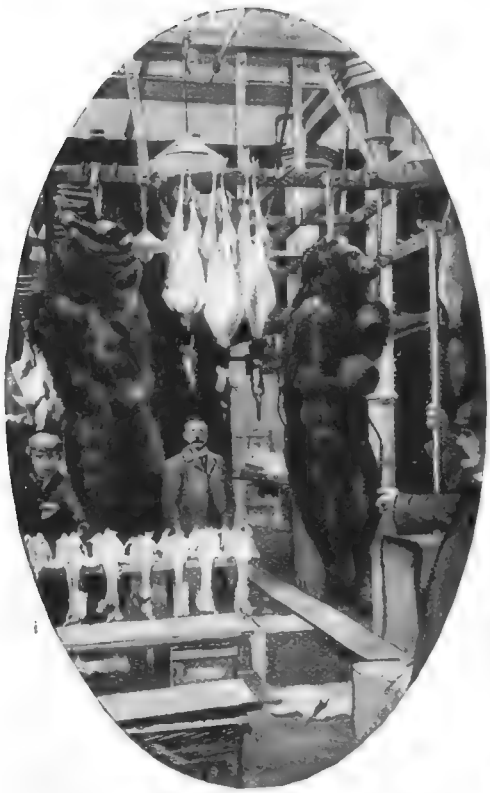

Photo *Advance Agency*

Two bears on sale at a game dealer's shop in the City. The bear being a muscular animal, its flesh is somewhat tough.

BEAR STEAK.

When bears were "in season" one or two City restaurants supplied the more reckless of their customers with the least tough portions of the animal's carcase.

Several salesmen in Smithfield Market acquired a few fine Russian bears, which were sent over frozen, and thus the enterprising City restaurateurs were able to keep the supply of bear steaks and cutlets equal to the demand.

A dish of roast bear could be obtained for about the price paid for lamb or venison. Bear hash, with red currant jelly, was also served.

Undoubtedly, the most valuable portion of the bear is his skin, and only certain parts of his carcase are tolerable as food. Even then, bear-flesh requires a trained palate, and a stock of enthusiasm which only the young possess. As a matter of fact the inclusion of bear's meat in the menu was more for the sake of advertisement than anything else.

A SIKHIM BRIDGE.

The picture below shows two sons escorting their mother and her baby over a bridge in Sikhim, fifty feet above the roaring torrent which it spans.

Sikhim is one of the minor states forming part of the Northern frontier of India, and through its mountain passes run all the roads leading to that part of Tibet which is of political importance.

Wonderful as the country is, with a temperature ranging from tropical heat to that of the snow-capped mountains twenty-four thousand feet in height, it is a land without good roads, and the bridges crossing its many furious streams are of a most flimsy appearance.

Europeans require much nerve to cross one of them, and the Lepchas, who inhabit the state, look upon the proceeding as so dangerous that a prayer-flag is attached to the bridge as a precautionary measure.

Photo *David Fraser.*

A bridge in Sikhim, Northern India. So dangerous do the natives consider the crossing of such a bridge that a prayer-flag is set on it to avert danger.

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A NOVELTY IN SEATING ACCOMMODATION.

THE scene of the photograph below, or at any rate the spot where the idea it illustrates originated, was a bleak, rain-sodden moor, completely destitute of seating accommodation. Upon this desolate expanse a battalion of weary volunteers sought in vain for something to sit upon.

Their case seemed hopeless. Everyone eyed the humid, yielding soil askance, and not a man ventured to extend himself upon it.

The drill book and such other technical works as were at hand gave absolutely no guidance as to what should be done in the circumstances.

Gloom fell upon one and all.

Then suddenly a smart sergeant exclaimed: "I have solved the problem."

Three cheers having been given in honour of this genius, he proceeded to form the battalion into a circle.

At the command "Sit!" everyone sank into a sitting posture, and lo! each man found himself seated on a comrade's knees.

The weary battalion sighed with satisfaction. But every good thing comes to an end in time, and the volunteers' well-earned rest was no exception to the general rule.

Its termination was extremely abrupt.

In the circle of men there existed the inevitable practical joker, and it occurred to him that it would be a funny thing to lie down very suddenly.

He did so, and the whole battalion, as one man, imitated him, from sheer inability to prevent themselves.

They then proceeded to show the practical joker the error of his ways.

Photo *Arthur W. Ellis.*

How some volunteers found seating accommodation where none was. The men are sitting on one another's knees.

Photo *Dannenbery, Berlin.*

Four little lions which have been great favourites with the public at a Berlin menagerie.

FOUR LITTLE LIONS.

THESE four little lions were born only a few days before the photograph was taken, but they had already attracted a great deal of interest among the visitors to the Berlin menagerie whose property they are.

The cubs are hardly larger than puppies, and quite as affectionate.

They would make charming companions for children, and the public makes the most of the permission accorded it to nurse the little lions.

It seems almost impossible to believe that these gentle creatures will one day grow up into fearful-looking lions.

But that is one of the drawbacks to keeping lion cubs; in common with pet lambs, they will insist on growing up.

The lioness is devoted to her young, and it is well known among sportsmen that to attack one with cubs is a most dangerous proceeding.

Great care has to be taken of wild animals born in captivity while they are young. Their health is most carefully safeguarded, and everything that skill and science can suggest is done for their welfare.

An animal that has been born in captivity and has been successfully reared is a source of great pride to those in charge of it, and this can be understood when it is remembered what a difficult task it is to reproduce in a European country the surroundings of a wild animal in its natural state.

Large sums are said to have been refused for these cubs.

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Photo *Keystone Photo Co,*

The remains of the Russian military bands present at Mukden.

MELANCHOLY RELICS

THIS pile of battered brass represents all that is left of the Russian bands which were present at the battle of Mukden.

Mingled with dented euphoniums, trombones that will never sound again, and broken cornets, are the side-drums that once so often beat the charge for the dashing regiments of the great White Tsar.

One and all, like the men who owned them, are silent for ever, and their departed glory is typical of the downfall of the mighty Russian army.

The Japanese sentry standing guard over the pile of instruments contrasts strikingly with it.

The crash of bands heralded the advance of the Mikado's battalions; but, nevertheless, they went on their way irresistibly, and nothing could stop them.

They represented the modern school of war. While wanting nothing necessary for fighting, they had nothing superfluous. There was no display, no ostentation; simply a quiet determination to win.

The number of instruments in the heap shows that it consists of the *débris* of not one but many bands.

The Battle of Mukden was in reality a series of battles, and some of the fiercest fighting in the Russo-Japanese War took place during the eight or nine days it raged. The Russians suffered heavy losses, and retreated before the Japanese. The latter, however, also had numerous casualties.

A PERILOUS LEAP.

THE scene of this leap, a lovely spot situated on the beautiful Wisconsin River, is a favourite resort of tourists in the summer.

This wonderful photograph was taken as a man was in the act of leaping from one rock to the other across a chasm thirty or forty feet deep.

It is satisfactory to be able to state that he arrived safely on the other side, but the spectators of the daring feat shuddered to think of what would have occurred had he jumped a foot short.

As might be expected, the leap was attempted for a wager.

A young athlete had been boasting of the record long jump he had made at his University sports, when suddenly a bystander exclaimed:

"I'll bet a fiver you won't jump from one of those rocks to the other."

"Very well," replied the young man, "I'll take you."

On the following day, at the time appointed for the jump, an excited crowd gathered at the foot of the rocks. The young athlete and his challenger were high above them.

Throwing off his coat, the young man took a short run and hurled himself into space.

The crowd held its breath.

Then a cheer went up as he was seen to land safely on the other side of the gulf.

Photo *Underwood.*

A dangerous leap across a chasm near the Wisconsin River.

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MISS LADE.

The Story of a "Sell."

By Fox Russell.

At the beginning of last season I thought I would run down for a couple of days' hunting in the Old Vale country, and accordingly I betook myself to the very comfortable quarters afforded by the "George and Dragon" at Mudbury.

Next morning hounds met at Featherby Cross Roads, only five miles away, so that I was able to indulge in a leisurely breakfast, and then ride my hunter quietly on, instead of driving, or hustling along on a covert hack.

The day was a fine one, a touch of south in the air being by no means unwelcome to one who has passed his "salad days." I had just lit a mild, after-breakfast cigar, when, somewhat to my surprise, I saw, riding along the lane just ahead of me, a man I knew fairly well—Colonel Clump, late 7th Batt. Bushey Park Fusiliers, and a member of my club. He was accompanied by an extremely pretty girl, faultlessly attired, and riding a very neat bay horse.

Just seeing that my bunch of Neapolitan violets was properly adjusted, and my hunting stock exactly in the right place, I hurried on and overtook them.

Somehow or other, I thought the gallant Colonel didn't look over well pleased at seeing me; whereas the lady smiled sweetly, showing a beautiful set of pearly teeth, which greatly added to her other attractions of face and form. Gad! one wouldn't want to see a better-looking girl anywhere, and I determined that Clump, willy-nilly, should introduce me.

I talked to him for a minute or two, but he only looked embarrassed and answered in monosyllables. "No fool like an old fool," I thought (Clump is certainly my senior; he says he isn't, but I'm perfectly certain he is, by at least six months), and I suppose the fellow wanted to monopolise the girl himself. This I was not going to stand; so, taking advantage of a moment when the lady rode ahead, on account of the narrowness of the lane, I said to him:

"Won't you introduce me to your friend?"

Clump looked as though he didn't quite like it, but replied:

"Oh, certainly. Miss Lade, my friend, Major Smart, wishes to be introduced to you—allow me—Major Smart—Miss Lade."

Well, by Gad! that was enough for me. I made the running, you may be sure, quite regardless of the increasing stiffness of old Clump, a stiffness which seemed to get more and more pronounced as we began to overtake the regular hunting crowd wending their way to the meet. The man really seemed as if he were half ashamed of his fair companion. By Jove! *I* was not. The lady was most

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affable, and by the time we were within sight of the trysting-place, she and I were on the best of terms. I think one might almost have called it a flirtation—the old story, you know: a soldier and a pretty woman, hey?

This being a strange country, I naturally didn't know a soul in the whole field, so I was able to devote myself entirely to the charming Miss Lade, and, without a particle of conceit—for I'm not at all a conceited man—I think I may say that the lady found me mighty interesting. I told her my tiger stories, and she believed 'em; I told her my other adventures, and she took the greatest pains to understand 'em, put a whole lot of questions about 'em—not the vapid "Really!" "Oh, how thrilling!" etc., commonplaces of society maidens—there was a "snap," a "go" about this girl that, by Jove! I hadn't met with before in this country—more the sort of thing you find in the average grass widow at Simla, don't you know? Gad! she was charming! But, strangely enough, none of the women out seemed to know her, whereas all the men *did*.

Just as hounds were moving off she said to me, in the prettiest manner possible:

"Would you mind keeping with me, Major Smart, just for a little while?"—and she looked at me quite pleadingly.

Keep with her? Egad! I should like to have seen the fellow who'd have kept me *from* her, I thought.

"My dear Miss Lade, what could I desire better?" I asked gallantly. I am always gallant to women; it is inborn in me, and always bubbles to the surface, especially when the woman's a pretty one.

By Gad! she blushed, actually blushed, and dropped her pretty eyelashes over her prettier eyes. I could see I had made an impression.

"My horse, although an absolutely perfect hunter, is rather a fidget until we get away, and always likes another one beside him, so if you really, *really* don't mind, Colonel Smart——"

She would insist on calling me "Colonel," giving me brevet rank, the puss! And, really, when the eyelashes fell, she was a lovely creature.

We moved off together, and, as there were people all round us, I had to drop the personal element in our conversation and talk about the horses.

"That's a rare good-looking bay of yours," I said, scanning him narrowly through my eyeglass.

"Oh, he's a beauty, and jumps magnificently; he is really an astonishing horse with hounds; but I shall have to sell him, I'm afraid. You see, he's up to far more than my weight, and papa says I must part with him and get a lighter horse. I do so hope," she added fervently, "that my dear Crown Prince will get into good hands."

"Sure to, sure to, my dear young lady," I said consolingly, but she only heaved a sigh, as though not quite convinced.

I was about to tender some further consolation, when, one or two hounds beginning to speak to a scent within the covert, a sudden movement of the horsemen around us interrupted me. I crammed my hat down and prepared for action.

"You won't leave me, Colonel Smart, will you?" she said again rather anxiously.

"Nothing will induce me to do so, my dear young lady," I said with fervour. I should have liked to squeeze her hand, but that being impracticable, I had to be content with giving her a tender look of encouragement.

We got away with rather a bad start, and when you do that, we all know it's no easy matter to get on terms with hounds again. My fair companion, too, though evidently a beautiful horsewoman, appeared to be rather lacking in courage, for as soon as we came to the first really big fence, she pulled her horse up, and, turning to me with a piteous little look in her beautiful blue eyes, said:

"Oh, Colonel Smart, don't think me silly, will you? but I simply *dare* not jump that rail, though I know Crown Prince would do it perfectly—if you, for instance, were on his back. Can't we find some way round?"

She looked rather helplessly around her, and I saw that she really was unequal to the feat of facing the post and rails before us. So I looked about, and soon found a weak-looking place in the hedge alongside the rails, and half scrambled through, half jumped it; but though we rode for an hour or more on the line of the chase, we never actually got within sight of hounds. Every fence that looked at all big and strong my companion appeared to shirk, which seemed a pity, as she was mounted on a horse which was such a genuinely good hunter.

Whilst drawing for an afternoon fox, Miss Lade shared the contents of my sandwich-case and—yes, there was nothing unmaidenly in the action—the whisky and apollinaris I had brought with me. She had proved a most charming companion all day, and the only thing which overshadowed our geniality

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was her evident sadness at the thought of parting with her favourite horse.

"Have you many hunters?" I ventured to ask at last.

"Oh, papa always has plenty, but I think I shall never *love* a horse as I love Crown Prince."

And again the eyelashes fell on the pretty cheeks.

"Gad! I'm a tender-hearted fellow myself," I exclaimed, "though I *am* a soldier. Why shouldn't I buy the horse of you, my dear Miss Lade? I'm sure he's well up to my weight, and you tell me he's a fine performer across country. What's the price? or do you prefer me to treat with your father?"

"Oh, I really couldn't let you do that," she said, though her face brightened up perceptibly. "I'm sure papa wouldn't approve of my taking advantage of your good-nature."

"My dear girl — er — beg pardon—my dear Miss Lade, I mean, the advantage is all on my side."

"Well, of course it's a great temptation to me, because then I know the horse would go into good hands; but I really—no, *quite* really—*could* not let you do it."

I adjusted the Neapolitan violets in my coat again, and, turning to her impressively, said:

"I must insist; no, no, I must insist."

"Oh, you really are a dear——" she began in an impetuous manner, then stopped abruptly, blushing a rosy red.

"I suppose I ought not to have said that," she concluded with an embarrassed air, which was most becoming. Becoming! why, it was irresistible! I took her little hand in mine—we were in a lonely ride in the wood, and no one else was present, so it didn't matter — and pressing it gently, said:

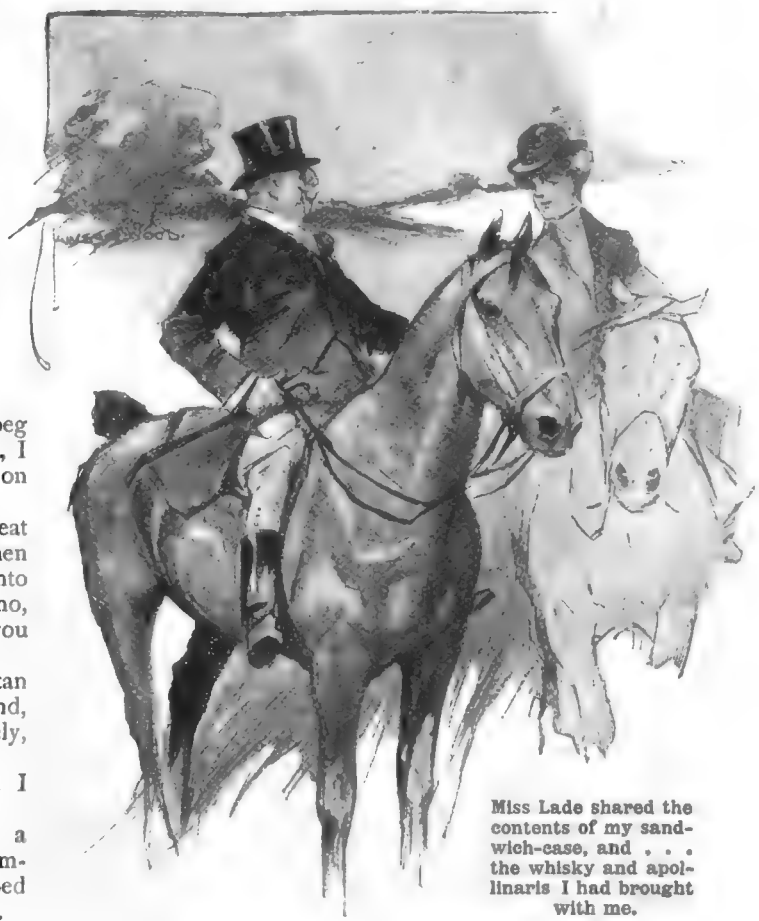
"My dear Miss Lade, it will give me the sincerest pleasure—*pleasure*, I repeat—to buy your horse and give him the good home you so greatly wish for—a wish that does your gentle heart infinite credit, if you will permit me to say so."

I looked into her eyes again. I suppose she knew instinctively that mine would certainly be a good home for her pet.

I asked, very delicately, what price she wanted for the horse.

For a moment she looked rather embarrassed; then she said:

"Well, papa was saying last night that he ought to fetch 200 guineas, but to a good home I would take 150. But, oh, it *must* be a good home!"



Miss Lade shared the contents of my sandwich-case, and . . . the whisky and apollinaris I had brought with me.

The dear girl seemed quite overcome with gratitude to me, and for a time we rode along in silence. Gad! it was quite affecting. I *think* she wiped away a tear.

Sport was so poor as the day progressed that, towards three o'clock, I suggested we should wend our way homewards. She told me she lived at Satchells, a mile through Mudbury.

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"I hope I may have the pleasure of riding home with you?" I said.

She graciously acquiesced, and then asked:

"Are you staying in Mudbury?"

"Yes, at the 'George and Dragon.' May I offer you some tea when we get there?"

She made a shy negative movement with her head.

"And, as there's no time like the present," I continued, "I might write you the cheque for your horse, and then you could send him over to me some time to-morrow."

And after a pretty little show of reluctance, she consented.

We rode through Mudbury and into the stable-yard of the "George and Dragon" together. Here I dismounted and helped her off her horse. We went into the coffee-room, where I ordered tea for one and a whisky and soda for myself. Then I went to my private sitting-room, got my cheque-book, and returned. Gad! she looked a perfect picture as she sat by the fire, warming one neat little riding boot and sipping hot tea.

"I can give you the vet.'s certificate of soundness," she said, "if you like."

"Thank you," I replied, "I am sure I can take all that on trust." I sat down at the table, and drew the pen and ink towards me.

"Whom shall I make the cheque payable to?" I asked.

"Oh, to papa, please—John Lade. I don't understand about these things myself."

I duly wrote out the draft, placed it in an envelope, and handed it to her. And just before she left, the dear girl said she hoped I'd be out hunting with the O. V. again very soon, and added that she had spent a most pleasant day. We parted with mutual regrets, and I shall always think of her as one of the most delightful of her charming sex.

When I went up to town next morning, I left my new purchase at the "George and Dragon," as I intended to run down and have a day on him the following week.

That day week, I rode the new horse with the O. V. for the first time. Miss Lade was not out, and I was distinctly disappointed. Hounds got away with a fox almost as soon as they were thrown into covert, and, swinging right-handed, like a flock of pigeons, they ran across a pretty piece of country, with good, sound turf and small fences.

Crown Prince was hardly as comfortable a galloper as I should have imagined from having seen Miss Lade on his back, but, still, one can't have everything. He jumped two or three small, weak places satisfactorily, but on coming to a stile he blundered badly, and nearly came down on his head. However, he recovered himself and galloped on; but when I rode him at the succeeding obstacle—a stiffly-laid and plashed fence—he whipped round and refused to have anything to do with it, and ultimately I had to get through a gateway into the next field. Then we came to a small brook, where he blundered again, and dropped one hind leg in.

He refused the next fence three times, and finally, when I let the spurs into him at the fourth attempt, he tumbled neck and crop into the field beyond. My hat was "concertina'd" and my coat plastered with mud. Gad, the horse was a regular wretch!

I rode the brute slowly back to stables after this, pondering over my disappointment. I wondered how on earth Miss Lade had ever got him over a country at all, let alone how he had become her "favourite hunter." Consummate horsewoman though she was, she *could not* make a rip like this any use as a jumper. And then I recollected that the day we were out together she had pulled up at every big fence we came to. Still, *that* was because she herself had lacked the courage to ride over it, not because the horse—I thought more and more deeply as I continued on my homeward journey. Resigning my horse to the hostler, I returned to town in a very pensive mood.

Two days later I found myself the sole occupant of the smoking-room at the Senior. I was deep down in an arm-chair and well hidden by the *Times*, when a couple of men I knew, busily talking, entered the room, rang for whiskies and sodas, and settled down to the enjoyment of their cigars. I wondered idly whether their conversation could possibly apply to me.

"Yes, he's been awfully 'had' over it, so I've been told. He got himself introduced to her. She's a very good-looking girl; she flattered him, made love to him, and then stuck him with the worthless brute she was riding——"

Now, *that* sounded almost like my own experience.

"Oh," said the other man contemptuously, "served the old fool right—always humbugging after some woman, or making an egregious ass of himself in other ways."

Then, of course, I knew that they couldn't be referring to me.

"Yes, I don't suppose he'll get much sympathy when Clump tells the whole story! The girl, it appears, is the daughter of a

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horse-dealer down there, and is notorious for the clever way she sticks worthless horses into any amorous old fool"—clearly nothing to do with me, but still I couldn't help taking an interest in the subject under discussion—"at substantial prices. She's a real wonder at it. The brute she palmed off on old 'Puff and Blow'"—quite impossible that this could have been meant for me—"was a wretch that 'papa,' as she so innocently calls him, picked up for a tenner out of a butcher's cart. And the old idiot actually gave a hundred and fifty for him. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the other.

"You can bet," continued the speaker, "the lady didn't risk her neck over anything that wanted jumping, the day she was on the brute. She knows a jolly sight too much to do *that*. Talked about the beast being a pet, and wanting a good home for him. Why, she'd never ridden him before in her life! Ha! ha! ha!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the other man.

"And old 'Puff and Blow' took it all in—swallowed it whole, by Jove!"

I got more interested than ever in trying to discover who old "Puff and Blow" could possibly be.

What an extraordinary name to bestow on a fellow creature! I wonder what could have been the origin of it?

"What happened?" went on the second speaker.

"Oh, the usual thing. Got the brute over a few little obstacles, and then, as soon as they came to a fence which took a bit of jumping he went tail over head at it. Wonder old 'Puff and Blow' didn't break his silly neck."

"Wouldn't be much loss to the Club if he had," rejoined the other brutally.

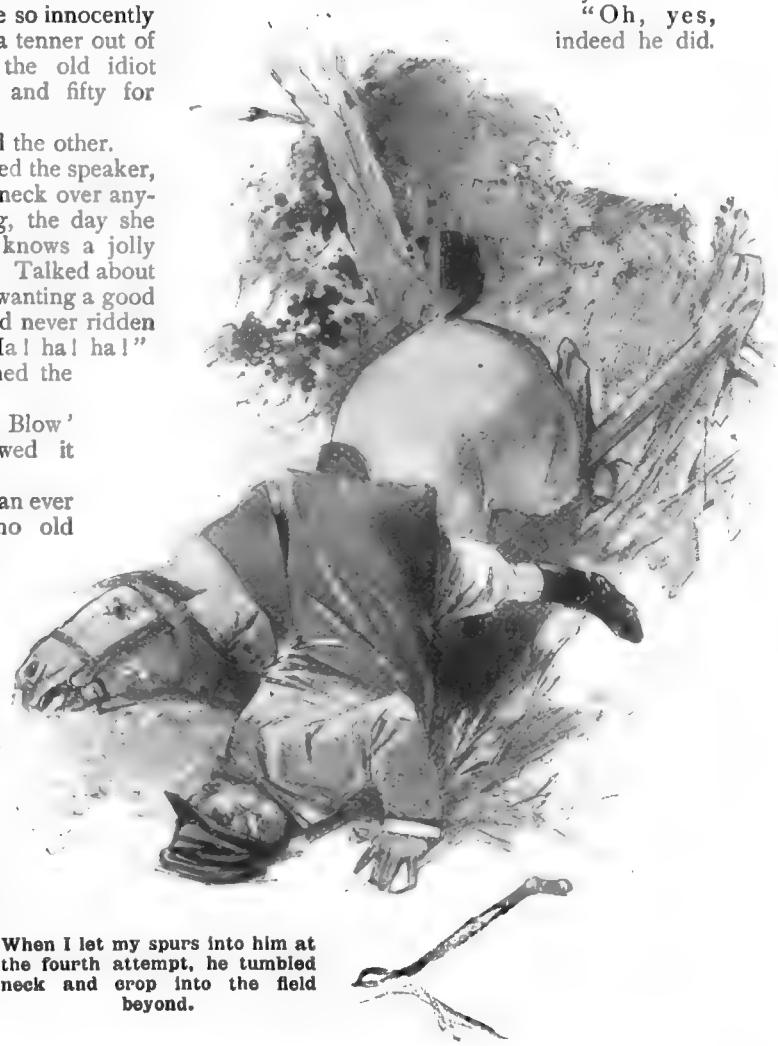
The two wretches grinned, and I really felt sorry for the victim they were discussing.

"I hear old 'Puff and Blow' (again that offensive and mysterious nickname) was so awfully disgusted that he sold the horse for fifteen sovereigns the next day. Some cabby bought it, but promptly returned the beggar as he wouldn't even go in harness!"

Most extraordinary coincidence again. I had sold my worthless wretch to—well, not to a cabman but to a fellow who drove a 'bus, and he did return him next day for not answering the warranty of "quiet in harness."

"Did he actually pay the hundred and fifty?"

"Oh, yes, indeed he did.



When I let my spurs into him at the fourth attempt, he tumbled neck and crop into the field beyond.

Miss Lade captured his heart, you see, and his brains also must have been——"

"Mislaid, eh? Ha! ha! ha!"

"Ha! ha! ha! *ha!*" echoed the other.

The name of Lade suggested—er—yet another—er—coincidence. I really *must* find out who old "Puff and Blow" is. Good! I'll go out at once and ask the hall porter.

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A MEDIÆVAL CORNER.

Or, The Ballad of Hubert and Adeline.

When the lion-hearted Monarch sought to smite the Moslem horde,
When through all the shires of England knight and baron bared the sword.
When in every street Crusaders sailed along with dashing mien,
Then it was the young Sir Hubert loved the gentle Adeline.
(This we've noticed: When the country their assistance ill could spare,
Gallant knights in olden ballads fell in love with ladyes fayre.)

Though a comely youth was Hubert, it was clearly not his line
To decapitate the Moslem, or to cleave him through the chine;
And, if we may speak quite soothly, neither was he greatly gone
On the prospect of a scrimmage Acre-way or Ascalon;
Why with alien blood should Hubert stain his hands, so white and clean,
When he had a chance of wooing the bewitching Adeline?

Straightway he sought out her father, pleading for the damsel's hand
In the silken speech that only ardent lovers understand;
But the stern and haughty parent glared at first, then glowered and frowned,
Crying: "Hold, enough! My daughter ne'er shall wed with cringing hound—
Hound here dallying in safety! Caitiff! Coward! Carpet-knight!
Hence! Begone!" (Those old-time barons weren't excessively polite.)

Passed young Hubert from the chamber of Sir Nicholas de Ware;
Oh! his heart was very weary, likewise, as the Scotch say, "sair";
"Sairer" still the heart of her who saw her lover ride away,
Much she murmured "*Miserere!*" then "Alack!" and "Well-a-day!"

While anon the cry of "Willow-waly!" to the rest she'd add.
(Maidens in romantic ballads always say that when they're sad.)

Mused Sir Hubert as his courser ambled on across the plain,
"Shall I fight to please her father? Nay, not so! I might get slain!
Why should I assist Press varlets to indite with lurid pens
On their posters: 'Awful Slaughter of Ten Thousand Saracens'?
Coward I may be, and caitiff, yet my wits are sharp, I ween,
And I'll win that old man's daughter, win the blushing Adeline!"

To the cell of Friar Peter Hubert hastened then away—
Peter studied mystic science, pondered o'er it night and day;
Treasures quaint and treasures curious he had stored within his mind,
Deeper scholar than old Peter no one ever hoped to find;
For prodigious was his learning, and profoundly versed was he
In black magic, necromancy, wizard lore, and alchemy.

As a rule, his face was solemn, and his brow was dark with thought,
But to-day he was behaving as no holy friar ought;
Swift he strode around his hovel at the pace called double-quick,
Shouting: "Hubert, I have done it! Been and gone and done the trick!
Lo! that heap of glittering metal which thy wondering eyes behold
Was, I swear it, lead this morning, but my skill hath made it GOLD!

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'Listen, Hubert. Well thou knowest never night to morning wore,
But I strove to change base metal into this thrice-precious ore;
Thou, too, while the gallants wasted all their hours in camp or court,
Patiently hast watched the pipkin, cleansed alembic, filled retort;
After weary months of failure, now our victory's complete,
Thou and I, my lusty Hubert, have the whole world at our feet!"

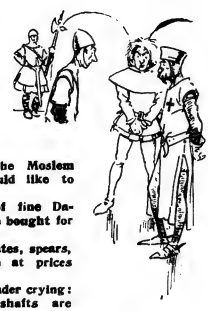
Hey! but Hubert's heart grew buoyant, and his face was full serene,
As he chuckled: "Saintly Peter, thou hast won me Adeline!
Now Sir Nicholas will hardly from my suit consent withhold,
He'll forget my lack of courage since I do not lack for gold;
Nor before I wed my treasure—sweet she is beyond all maids—
Shall I have to face the music at those horrible Crusades!"

Quoth the Friar: "That reminds me, it is writ in vulgar lore,
People who have gold in plenty nearly always wish for more;
I have gazed into the crystal, seen a strange age yet to be,
When to 'pools,' and 'trusts,' and 'corners' all the world will bend the knee;
Let us take time by the forelock, exercise our subtle wits,
Briefly, let us make a 'corner' in Crusaders' requisites!"

* * * * *

Brave King Richard walks his chamber, restive grows his lion heart,
He would fain be off Crusading, but, alas! he cannot start;
All the purlieus of his palace swarm with martial men of might,
Who would gladly go a-fighting had they wherewithal to fight;

But the current market prices quite preclude a ready sale,
So they needs must stand there waiting, idly waiting for the mail!

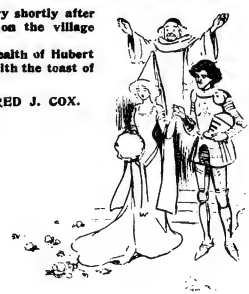


Though against the Moslem rabble all would like to have a fling,
Tempered blades of fine Damascus can't be bought for anything:
Hauberks, breastplates, spears, and lances rule at prices none can pay,
Never comes the trader crying: "Cloth-yard shafts are cheap to-day!"
At his bare Exchequer Richard, as the awful cost he counts,
Curses Fate, and likewise curses what they're asking for remounts!

One fair morn, when riding homewards, great Sir Nicholas de Ware
Met old Peter and young Hubert, each a multi-millionaire;
And he cried: "I know your secret, and that secret I'll retail
To our lion-hearted Monarch—villains, ye have 'cornered' mail!"
"True, great sir," young Hubert answered, "'corner's' what they call the thing,
But I'd rather for my dearest, by your grace, produce a '*ring*'!"

Then it was the baron, smitten by the signs of wealth he saw,
Smiled the smile of acquiescence on his future son-in-law!
Then the armourer grew busy, then the market "rig" was stayed,
Then the lion-hearted Richard started off on his Crusade;
Then—or very shortly after—rustics on the village green
Drank the health of Hubert coupled with the toast of Adeline.

FRED J. COX.



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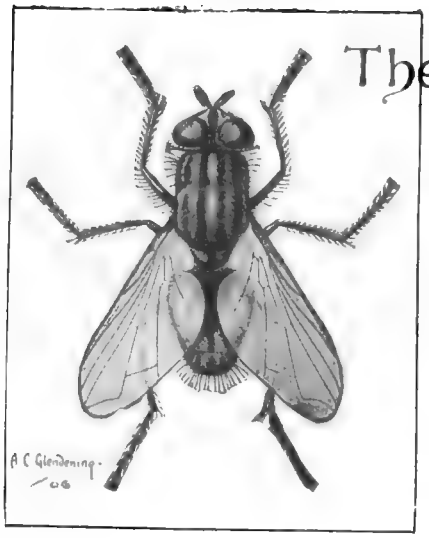

The Romance Of The House Fly

A Minute Account of Its Existence from Birth to the Grave.

By Henry Hill.

In asking one's friends to take a deeper interest in an old acquaintance, there is always a feeling of satisfaction when one can give a good account of the social position of the family, and also if possible of the past life of the particular member of it brought to their notice; but it has to be admitted that in both these respects the reputation of the house fly is somewhat tarnished. In seeking, then, to set forth its romantic life-history in such a manner as, if possible, will raise it in the general esteem, it may be stated at once that from the first point of view, at any rate, there is nothing of which the most fastidious need complain.

The family to which the house fly belongs forms, indeed, the highest group of the *two-winged* flies, which, in its turn, is the highest and most numerous order of all insects. It is, therefore, of the *élite* of the insect world, above suspicion, and entitled to considerable respect. With regard to the past life of the individual, however, the case is not quite so satisfactory, but before going into so delicate a subject, perhaps it would be well rightly to understand the family position, and exactly what is meant by two-winged flies.

To simplify the matter, if we take as an illustration the dragon-fly, which is an organism much lower in the scale of insect life than the house fly, we see that it has four wings, all nearly alike.

Travelling higher up the scale, we find that there is a tendency on the part of the hind wings to become smaller, and, linking with the fore wings, to act as one, as in the ants, bees, and wasps; until the family of the house fly is reached, where the hind wings entirely disappear, and their place is taken by exceedingly complex and highly-sensitive, club-shaped organs known as the balancers or poisers, which, though small, are of the greatest importance to the insect.

These are not easily seen in the house fly, because they are protected with a hood, but in the Daddy-long-legs they are uncovered, and are plainly-visible. Their use is not altogether understood, but they are supposed to assist in flight, because it is found that if they are in any way damaged, or even covered, the insect loses all control over the direction of its flight, and either soars in a curious spiral completely out of sight, or flies perpendicularly to the ground.

Returning to the important question of the history of the individual, while there is much to regret, there is a good deal to admire; for, although its youth is spent in a debauchery of unclean living, its middle age is passed in regretting and severing the connections of its youth, and in developing those qualities which shall enable it to come to us as a pure and blameless member of the household. This is not a mere figure of speech; let us consider what actually happens.

The eggs of the house fly are laid in stable refuse, or in decaying vegetable matter, in packets. Hatching in a few hours, the youngsters come into the world as footless grubs; and, finding themselves in a land of plenty, act as Nature's scavengers and eat voraciously. At the end of three or four days—the number varying

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A fly emerging from the second egg state. In the front part of its head all the fluids of its body are temporarily concentrated. This makes the head firm and the fly uses it as a battering ram to break out of its case.

with the temperature—the grub, having satisfied its appetite, ceases to eat, and then a truly wonderful thing happens.

So wonderful, indeed, that, were it not for its everyday occurrence, it would be justly regarded as little short of a miracle; for the grub, having spent its early days in this debauchery, now begins to sever the connections of its youth, and to fit itself for our society. Ceasing to eat, it burrows into the ground and does not immediately change into a pupa, but rests for a while. During this "resting" stage, its skin gradually hardens, and changing colour, forms a case, within which all the organs of the body which have been so rapidly developed, instead of remaining to form part of the chrysalis, actually dissolve into a creamy fluid.

If this fluid be now examined under a powerful microscope, no trace of the organs, either of the grub or of the fly, can be found. All that can be seen are some extremely minute discs, which up to this point have been perfectly quiescent, but which, nourished by this creamy fluid, now rapidly develop and form the organs of the future fly. We are therefore faced with this most extraordinary fact, that after the grub has fed vigorously and grown rapidly for several days, there is practically *a return to the egg and a re-development of the insect;* and when the fly eventually emerges, it bears no resemblance whatever to the grub which it once was, constituting the most complete and highest form of metamorphosis known.

Should all go well, this wonderful change from the first to the second egg state is accomplished in about six days. Should, however, the temperature fall below 45 deg., all development is at once arrested, and is delayed until that point is exceeded, when it will proceed from the stage in which it was before the interruption. A real old-fashioned winter does a great many useful things, but it does not kill the insects, as many good folks imagine. During that time they defy the keenest frost. Indeed, by hardening the ground and protecting them from, and killing, the birds, it acts as their best friend. It need not, then, be a matter for surprise, on a warm day following weeks of intense cold, to find them as much in evidence as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

When these discs have matured, and the fly, now fully developed, is ready to emerge from its prison, it has, as will be seen by looking at the illustration, a very odd appearance. Unlike the ants, it is not fortunate enough to have a nurse at hand ready to extricate it at the opportune moment, and has to perform that feat unaided. This it does in a very remarkable manner.

In front of its head is a sac, and

When the fly eats it forces small drops of saliva through its proboscis, and converts the food into a syrup, which is then sucked up into its mouth. It is also provided with small teeth in case the substance proves very hard.

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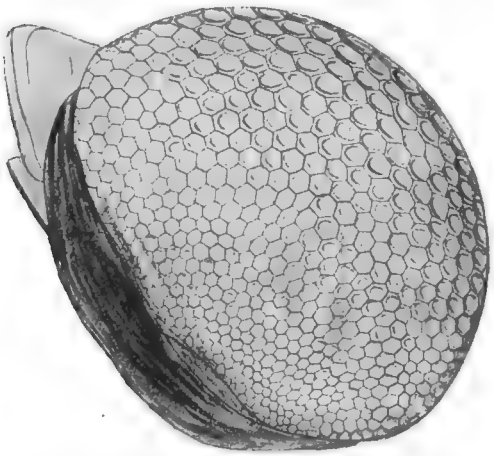
the fly, its head pointing towards the weakest part of its prison, concentrates all the fluids of its body into this sac, causing it to distend and to become temporarily firm; and, by using it as a battering-ram, the fly is enabled to force the end of its case, and to take its first glimpse of the world. Almost immediately,



On either side of the fly's head is a reddish-brown protuberance. These are its "compound eyes." Under a microscope each is seen to be composed of 2000 facets, and each facet holds a lens.

the fluids in the frontal sac, as it is called, begin to disperse through the body, the normal shape is assumed, and, after an interval to allow the legs and wings to dry, the first flight is taken.

It may, therefore, be said that the fly, like beings of a higher type who make their way suddenly in the world, suffers for a time from "swelled head," and, like those beings, is in great danger of ultimately becoming a nuisance.

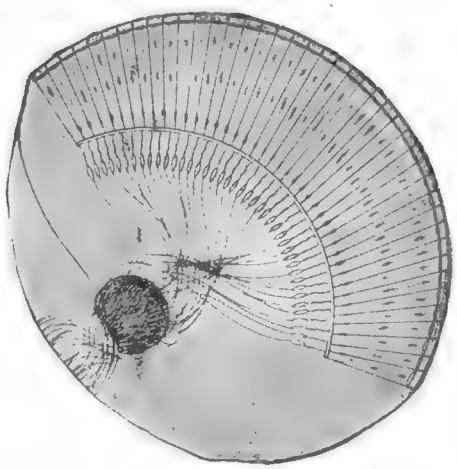
Having safely attained its perfect condition, there is a point to be noticed which is, perhaps, to many an even greater mystery than the metamorphosis. One often hears the remark: "What a dear little fly, it must be a young one!"

Well, however little it may be, it will not get any bigger, for the fly, as a fly, *never grows*.

All the growth is done in the grub stage; and when the grub ceases to eat, it ceases also to grow; for although during the chrysalis stage, as we have seen, immense changes take place, there is no addition to the size or to the weight, and when the perfect insect emerges, it is as large as it ever will be, the same being true of all insects which undergo a complete metamorphosis. Consequently, the small flies which appear in the spring have no connection with the larger ones seen in the summer. The small flies will never be bigger, and the larger ones were never smaller.

The life of the fly has so far been spent out of doors, but from this point the scene is changed, and our houses are invaded. Why so is more or less a mystery, for there is nothing about our generally unwelcome guest to give us any clue as to the reason of its preference for an indoor existence. Having, however, made our home its own, it must not grumble if it is subjected to a little gentle criticism. One thing that at once strikes us is its incessant habit of rubbing its legs together, and with them its wings, and it would seem to have an altogether exaggerated sense of the importance of cleanliness, if that, indeed, were possible.

To understand properly why this should be so, let us see what kind of a creature the fly is. Being a member of the insect world, its body is divided into three parts—the head, the thorax, and the abdomen. It has three pairs of legs attached to the thorax, and, as before noticed, two pairs of wings. Its skin, unlike ours, is not in one piece, but is divided into rings or segments. Most important of



When the eye is dissected it is found that each of these lenses is on the summit of a cone, to the base of which comes a fibre from an important nerve.

all, it does not breathe through its mouth as we do, but through holes in the sides of its body; and these holes are the entrances to tubes, conveying the air through the body to the blood, which does not circulate; the contrary, of course, being the case with us. These tubes are something like india-rubber pipes, soft and pliable; and would easily close, and the fly be suffocated, were it not

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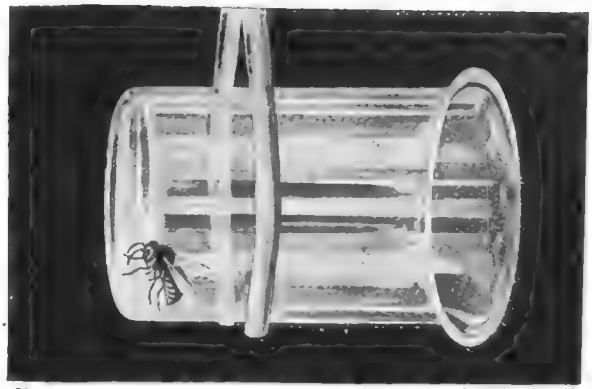
for the fact that round the interior are rings of a horny substance which effectually prevent them from being accidentally closed.

It can now be understood why the fly is so particular as to its cleanliness. In common with *all* insects it *has to be clean*, and to remove at once any foreign matter from its body, or these breathing-holes would become clogged, and it would cease to exist. Hence the value of insect powder lies not in the fact, as generally supposed, that the victims are poisoned, but that as they walk over it a portion collects on the body, and being of a sticky nature, gradually chokes the entrances to the breathing-tubes.



If a bee or a wasp be placed in a glass held with the bottom to the light, it will try for hours to escape in the direction of the light. A fly would at once depart through the open end.

There is another great and most interesting difference between the fly's mode of breathing and our own. We take in and expel air through the *same* orifice. The fly does nothing of the kind. It will, indeed, be readily understood that if it took in and also let out air through these breathing-holes, the finer tubes would never be filled, as there would not be sufficient pressure to force the air into them. Consequently a most wonderful provision is made to overcome this difficulty.

At the entrance to each tube there is a pumping chamber, which draws in the air from the outside, and forces it into the tube.

This is not all.

At intervals along the tube are valves, similar to those in our veins, which permit the air to pass forward, but prevent its returning, and so, under constant pressure, it is supplied to the smaller tubes as they ramify through the body. Surrounding these air-tubes are the blood-vessels, and the walls of both being very thin, the air passes through them into the blood, and, having purified it, escapes through the insect's skin.

This picture shows a jumping spider leaping on to a blue-bottle fly. The fly felt the disturbance in the air caused by the spider's movement, and escaped.

It is the more necessary to understand properly this interesting arrangement, because it explains so much that would otherwise be a mystery in the fly's economy. It explains, for instance, the lightness of its body, for a large bluebottle weighs but a grain, and so the spare proportions of its legs need be no longer a matter for wonder.

It also explains its comparatively great strength, for, while a horse can lift but three times its own weight, insects can sustain anything from sixty to seventy times heavier than themselves; the reason for this great advantage lying in the fact that, as we have seen, the blood is purified during the *whole* of its course, and not *part* of it, as is the case with mammals; and, consequently, energy is developed at a very rapid rate, giving great temporary strength.

It may account, too, for the "buzzing" which is such a source of annoyance to us. This is not caused by the movement of the wings, as is generally imagined, for the swiftest flight of a fly is a silent one, but probably by the passage of air in connection with these tubes.

The pressure of the air likewise helps to dispose of another interesting problem, as to how the fly gets its food. As we watch it helping itself so liberally to our sugar, we see that a trunk-like arrangement is lowered and raised when not required.

This is known by the fearful name of the proboscis.

Now, the fly does not possess any muscular

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power to enable it to sample our good things in this way, and the question arises: How is it done? Well, if the interior of the proboscis be examined, a number of chambers will be found, and the fly, by utilising some of the air in the breathing tubes, inflates these chambers, and the proboscis is forced downwards. To retract it, however, certain muscles provided for that purpose are brought into play.

This is all very well, but how is the sugar conveyed into the fly's body? To understand this correctly, let us treat the proboscis so that all the soft parts are removed and we shall see that what is left is a complicated system of tubes down which the fly forces small drops of saliva, converting the sugar into a syrup, and enabling it to be sucked up through the tubes into the mouth parts. Should the sugar, or whatever substance is being treated, prove too obstinate for this moistening process, the fly has a further resource, and bringing a set of minute teeth to bear upon it, worries it into small particles, and turns these into a consistency suitable for its requirements.

When the fly walks along the ceiling, it retains its foothold by means of little pads on its feet. These are filled with a white, sticky fluid which gums the fly on to the ceiling. The pads may be seen in this illustration of a fly's foot magnified.

We come now to what is perhaps the most interesting question in the whole of the fly's economy.

Can it see? And, if so, what does it see? To go into these points in detail would, of course, more than fill the space allotted to this article. They can but be glanced at. To begin with, let us look carefully at the fly's head, and we cannot fail to notice on either side a reddish-brown, semi-circular protuberance.

These are known as the *compound* eyes, because when looked at under a microscope each is seen to be made up of some 2000 six-sided figures called facets. Each of these facets holds a lens, and when the eye is dissected it is found that each of these lenses is on the summit of a cone, to the base of which comes a fibre from an important nerve.

Of course it does not follow that because a fly has apparently 4000 eyes that it sees 4000 spiders coming after it when only one is doing so, any more than, having two eyes, we see two lamp-posts when only looking at one, except under certain more or less well understood conditions; and, indeed, what a fly sees is a much disputed point.

There are two main theories around which the learned have had many prolonged controversies. One is that the fly with each one of these facets sees the whole of the object at which it is looking; the other, that it sees but a small part, this latter being known as the mosaic theory, because the object, as presented to the fly's vision, would be in the form of a mosaic pattern. Between these two theories expert opinion is about equally divided.

We are not yet, however, at the end of our trouble. The matter is further complicated, because we find, if we examine the fly's head more minutely, that there are, between the compound eyes, three simple eyes in the form of a triangle, with the apex towards the front of the head.

The question which naturally occurs to us is, why two kinds of eyes?

Well, that is a question which, like many others, is more easily asked than answered. It opens the way, however, to the other question. *Can* flies see? That is to say, can they see in the meaning of the word as we understand it? Both the theories to which reference has been made are based on the

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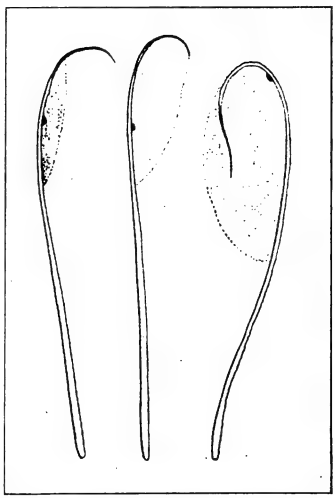
assumption that they not only see, but are the possessors of singularly acute vision. It is quite possible, however, that our point of view may be an altogether mistaken one, and that their flight is directed more by sensitiveness to movements of the atmosphere than by sight. Let us glance at a few experiments, which would seem in some small way to confirm this.

Here is an extremely simple one. If a bee or a wasp be placed in an ordinary glass, which is held with the bottom to the light, it will for hours struggle to escape in the direction of the light, although it could at once leave by the open end.

On the other hand, a fly placed in a similar position will at once escape. If, too, under the same conditions, the open end be covered with a piece of perfectly clear glass, which after a time, is moved just sufficiently to allow the body of the fly to pass, it will immediately take advantage of the opportunity, and will again escape. Now it is obvious that it cannot detect the difference between the glass and the space, because it will vainly try to get through the glass. What, then, gives it the clue to its chance of freedom? Simply the movement of the air in the direction of the opening. Again, if spiders are kept in captivity, it is found that flies offered as food have no instinctive fear of them, for should the spider not be hungry, they can be seen trying to crawl between its legs, or to walk over its back.

In this instance, however, it may be argued that natural conditions being wanting, the conclusions are of no great value, and that, of course, is granted. Yet, if a man were to find himself in a cage with a lion or a tiger, it is not at all likely that he would take similar liberties.



The fly's "little tallons." They are not fixed, but move in a notch, so that, by pressing them against the ceiling, it can force its feet away.

Let us, however, take one or two instances entirely under natural conditions. The illustration on page 191 shows one of our jumping spiders in the act of leaping on to a blue-bottle, and it is interesting to know that in this case the fly escaped.

Now, it will be noticed that the fly has its back turned to the spider, so that it could not have seen it coming, but it was warned by the disturbance of the atmosphere caused by the motion of the spider, that something was happening, and acted accordingly. Had the spider continued, as it began, to stalk the fly, as a cat does a bird, it would have caught it without difficulty, because there would have been no perceptible movement of the air to alarm its intended victim.

Some of our social wasps, and of the big, tropical spiders, have learnt this lesson; in the former case they visit the haunts of the flies and feign death till one is within reach, and then seize it; and in the latter they approach very slowly indeed, and, lifting their huge front legs almost imperceptibly over the fly's body, let them fall with lightning rapidity, when the chance of missing it is practically nil.

Perhaps, however, an experiment nearer home will be more interesting. If, when a fly has settled on the breakfast-table, an attempt is made to catch it with a rapid movement of the hand, the chances as to its success are equal. If, however, it be approached slowly, it can *always* be caught, even if it be looking in the direction of the fingers; and, in fact, if one has a sufficiently steady hand in combination with a well-trained eye, one can even pull a fly's nasal organ before it will attempt to escape; and many similar experiments will doubtless suggest themselves to those interested.

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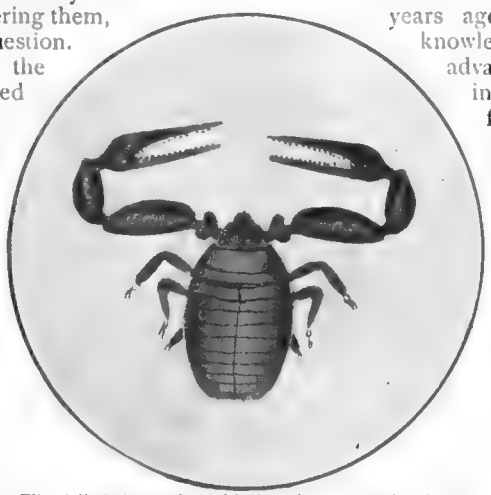
What a wonderful thing this nasal organ is! So small as to be seen with difficulty by the unaided eye, and yet containing some 17,000 pits, more or less connected with nerves. As if this were not sufficient for the better detection of the contents of our larder, Nature has, in case one should get damaged, provided a pair of them. They are the fly's antennæ, and that they enable it to smell, is proved by the fact that if they are seriously damaged and the insect is placed close to putrid meat, it will fail to notice it.

There remains the answer to that question of absorbing interest since the days of our childhood.

How does a fly walk on the ceiling?

Various explanations have been given, of which only two are probably worth noticing. Before considering them, let us ask another question. How does a fly *get* on the ceiling? It will be noticed that, as it flies round the room, its back is above its legs; but, when on the ceiling, the reverse is the case; so that, before it can get there it has to turn a semi-somersault in the air.

Now, as this is not an altogether easy thing to do, it is worth while inquiring *how* it is done. The question will the more easily be answered when the movements of a fly's wings are understood. Unlike a bird's, which have only an up-and-down motion, those of a fly can not only move up and down, but backwards and forwards, and even to a certain extent rotate; and as the wing-surface of insects is, for equal body-weights, from twenty to a hundred times greater than in birds, it will at once be seen what a powerful leverage the fly has at its disposal to enable it to turn itself in almost any direction.



Flies fall victims to fearful-looking but extremely minute parasites, such as this, which fasten on them, and slowly drain their vitality. This one is greatly magnified.

The fly having settled on the ceiling, let us return to the problem as to how it is enabled to stay there, and so defy the laws of gravity. Very quaint is the description of the earliest English writer on the phenomenon. He says:

"The fly hath six legs, but goes only upon four; the two foremost she makes use of instead of hands, with which you may often see her wipe her mouth and nose and take up anything to eat. The other four legs are cloven and armed with little tallons, by which she lays hold on the rugosities and asperities of all bodies she walks over, even to the supportance of herself, though with her back downwards, and perpendicularly invers'd to the horizon. To which purpose also the wisdom of Nature hath endued her with another singular artifice, and that is a fuzzy kind of substance like little sponges, with which she hath lined the soles of her feet, which substance is always repleated with a whitish viscous liquor, which she can at pleasure squeeze out, and so sodder and beglew herself to the plain she walks on, which otherwise her gravity would hinder."

That was written nearly three hundred years ago, and since then our knowledge has not been greatly advanced. For some time, indeed, the idea that the fly gummed itself to the ceiling was scouted in favour of the supposition that its feet adhered through the action of a vacuum, but a closer examination of the fly's foot will show that it is impossible to produce one. Looking at it we see that there is a pair of white pads "like little sponges," and upon each one of these pads there are about 1200 hollow hairs, which would effectually prevent the formation of a vacuum.

On further examination, it is found that each of these hairs divides at the end into two sickle-shaped filaments from a point inside the curve of which exudes the "whitish viscous liquor which she can at pleasure squeeze out, and so sodder and beglew herself to the plain she walks on, which otherwise her gravity would hinder."

What, however, about the "little tallons" which are so prominent in the illustration? They are extremely useful, because the fly, having gummed itself to the ceiling, requires some power to release its feet, and as these "tallons" are not fixed, but move in a notch, it can, by pressing them against the ceiling, force its feet away. No damage is done to the feet, because the action of the

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"tallons" is similar to our method of removing a postage-stamp put on by mistake; a corner is taken and it is pulled off obliquely.

The question, however, may very naturally be asked: "If the fly is so clever as to be able to walk on the ceiling and up and down the window-pane, why cannot it walk down the sides of the milk-bowl without falling into the milk?" There are two reasons.

In the first place, a fly *never walks* DOWN *a clean window-pane.*

It will walk up, and when near the top, will turn round and try to walk down, but invariably flies. Why it should do this is not altogether understood, but there would seem to be some difficulty in walking down a perfectly smooth surface. In addition, as the sides of the milk-bowl are often greasy on account of the milk, there is no hold for the fly's gummy pads, and so it slips. This can be seen more clearly if a fly be imprisoned in a glass which has contained milk, for then, however great its struggles, it will not be able to obtain a footing on the slippery sides. A word of warning may perhaps be given here, for the drowning fly in the milk-bowl is not altogether the joke that it is generally supposed to be. Medical men have, indeed, recently drawn attention to the fact that the cause of many cases of sudden illness in the summer, especially amongst children, may probably be traced to the sufferer having partaken of milk in which flies have been drowned after coming direct from some contaminating matter.

Several monstrosities called *chelifers* are frequently found on the legs of flies. It is supposed that they hang there in order to obtain a free ride from one place to another.

"Dear me!" someone says, "and yet this article is headed 'The Romance of the House-Fly.' Surely, after such a statement, 'How to *Get Rid* of the House-Fly' would have been more appropriate." Which brings us to ask the question: What becomes of all the flies?

Does it ever occur to us how much we look at everything from our own selfish point of view? The man, for instance, whom unkind Nature has allowed to grow a little taller than his hair, is filled with rage when a fly persists in settling on the unprotected portion of his head, and has to hurriedly consult a dictionary that he may delicately and at the same time adequately express his indignation.

He does not stop to think of the feelings of the annoying insect. If he did so he would be surprised—though perhaps also delighted—to find that in the same way that the fly is persecuting him it is probably itself being tormented with two or three fearful-looking creatures, which, having fastened themselves on it, are slowly but surely draining its vitality, and consequently hastening it to its end.

Six or seven weird-looking monstrosities, called *chelifers*, may also be hanging by their pincers to its legs; although their object in so doing is something of a mystery. It can scarcely be for food, for what nourishment can there be in the leg of a fly? Possibly their habit of fastening on to the leg is to enable them to procure free transit from one feeding place to another, but most probably the fly is gradually killed by its unwelcome guests.

As the autumn advances we sometimes see on our walls and window-panes the bodies of flies surrounded by a white, powdery substance. They have been killed by a fungus, the spores of which float in the air. The moment one such spore settles on a fly the insect is doomed. The spore germinates, the fungus grows in the blood, and as it develops forces its way through the blood-vessels, gradually sapping the strength of its host; until the day comes when, having settled on the wall, the fly is too weak to detach its feet, and the fungus continuing to grow, effectually fastens it down, and brings it to an untimely and miserable end.

During the autumn, too, the armies of spiders and other enemies fatten on the half-sleepy flies, and when the first severe frosts arrive "the last scene of all in this strange, eventful history" is enacted.

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MARLOW'S MASTERPIECE

How Love Fought with Art, and Won.

By G. M. Campbell.

I.

"Oh, Godfrey, you don't love me, or you would never serve me so!"

The young wife pressed her head on her husband's shoulder and wept piteously. Marlow tenderly stroked the golden hair with his sensitive painter's fingers.

"But, consider, dearest," he remonstrated gently, "I *must* do my work, you know, mustn't I? You are the sweetest thing on earth to me, but if you kept coming into the studio it would distract my thoughts. I should be wanting to kiss you when I ought to be handling the brushes."

"But I would be as quiet as a mouse! I wouldn't stir! If you loved me you would want to have me always—I hate to be away from *you!*"

"Come, dear, this won't do! Dry those tears and run and take Patch for a walk I shall have finished work by the time you come back, and then you shall sing me your little coon song."

Marlow gently unwound the arms that were clasped tightly round his neck, kissed the drooping mouth, and led his little wife out of the studio. The next moment the door was shut, and Sylvia heard the key turned in the lock.

It was a bitter moment for poor Sylvia. Throughout their honeymoon her husband had never left her side, she had seemed all in all to him. Now he spent all the long days in his studio, and apparently, though models came and went, she was to be denied entrée there. It was too cruel!

Godfrey Marlow was at this time about thirty years of age, and from childhood he had sought strenuously to make himself a painter worthy to be reckoned among the great. By nature somewhat of a mystic, he had devoted himself to his art and to his God. Lately, however, his life had taken a new and wonderful turn. "Love took up the harp of life," and a strange, sweet music vibrated in his soul.

It had been the secret dream of Marlow's life to paint a "Madonna and Child" that should not be in slavish imitation of the ancient great masters, but a new creation; a Madonna not of the Middle Ages, but of the twentieth century; not a dead thing conceived in the traditions of the dead past, but a living embodiment of the living soul of the present. As model for the Madonna he had secured a dark-eyed beauty of noble countenance, whom

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he had encountered by accident in one of the Jewish quarters of the city.

For the Child it had been easy to find an innocent flower sprung up among the weeds of the slums, whose careworn mother gratefully accepted a trifle to spend a quiet hour or two with her baby in the painter's studio. For the background he had gone last spring to Somersetshire to paint it direct from Nature. For his idea was to represent the Mother and the Divine Child in familiar English surroundings, the fruit trees blossoming above them, the peaceful sheep in the meadows, the happy birds among the boughs.

Returning from his work one afternoon, at a turn of the woodland pathway he had come upon Sylvia, and her young loveliness had caught his heart. This happy, light-hearted child seemed to him a part of the life and beauty of Nature—as joyous, as free from guile, as unself-conscious as the birds. His love grew apace. There followed a rapturous wooing, a speedy marriage, and a month of dreamy happiness.

Marlow had now returned to his first and greatest love—Art—to the work which was the religion of his life. Dearly as he loved his wife, how could he allow that butterfly into his studio—the place where his soul agonised after the ideal? She, poor child, could not understand the situation. But, as he said to himself, "she must learn to." It would be best for her in the long run if she realised once and for all that he must have his workroom quite to himself, free from all interruption.

So, the door locked, Marlow returned to his easel, and resumed his work.

II.

With a sigh of content Marlow dropped into the comfortable chair which his wife had drawn up to the fire for him. After a hard day's work it was delightful to spend an hour in Sylvia's fragrant presence.

"My dear girl," he said, as he took a cup of tea from her ministering hands, "you are the most refreshing thing alive. I've had a beastly day, couldn't get along anyhow. But when I come here life's worth living again."

Sylvia's face beamed with happiness. Never again had she pleaded for admittance to the studio; apparently she had learnt her lesson.

"I'm sorry you've had a disappointing day, dear." Then she ventured timidly: "What picture is it that doesn't seem to get on? Perhaps——" then her courage failed her, and the sentence ended in nothing. Godfrey did not heed his wife's tentative question. He never talked to her of his art or his ideals, he asked nothing of her but to be beautiful and happy. He had taken her little hand in his and was looking at it with a tender smile.

"What a thing it is, to be sure!" he murmured. "Like a bunch of rose-leaves—and just as easily crushed!"

At this moment Mr. Russell was announced, and with a shade of disappointment Sylvia rose to greet one of her husband's painter friends.

Russell was a burly man with a big voice.

"I say, old chap!" he boomed, "I've come for two things. I want to see how the Academy picture is getting on, and I've found just the bit of waterside you've been looking for. Will you come down to Surrey and let me show it to you?"

Godfrey's eyes lit up.

"Yes!" he said alertly. "To-morrow by the first train as ever is!" Then he rose. "Come and see 'The Pearl of Great Price.' I'm inclined to think it's not bad myself."

Quite absorbed in the thought of his picture, he marched Russell off to the studio at once.

Russell stood before the easel.

"By Jove!" he said after a pause. "You're doing better work than you've done yet. Fact is, my boy, you're a happy man: happy in your work — happy in your home!"

Marlow said nothing, but a look of tender gravity came into his face. No one knew so well as he what his love for his wife was doing for him. He left Russell for a moment and returned to Sylvia's boudoir.

"Sylvia," he said, "I took old Russell away because I knew we should bore you talking shop."

Sylvia's head was bowed over some needlework. He gently lifted her face to his and looked into her eyes, "blue as the rain-wash'd sky."

"You must put on your prettiest frock to-night, darling," he whispered; "for after dinner I shall take you to the opera."

When Russell had gone, Marlow entered his inner studio and lingered long before his Madonna, the picture which had never yet been seen by mortal eye but his own—his supreme effort at self-expression. The greater part of the day had gone in fruitless labour here. What was it that was lacking in the picture? Why could he not

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What was that? His picture? Yes! His Madonna, more precious to him than his own life, slashed to ribbons!

discover it, strive as he might? The consciousness of failure was heavy on his spirit, and there, in the silence and loneliness of the little room, he fell upon his knees, and his heart want up in a passionate prayer for light.

III.

On Monday morning early Marlow returned home. A glance at the curtained windows showed him that none of the household were yet stirring. He let himself into the studio at the back. "I may get an hour at the Madonna," he thought. "I feel in the mood to do some good work there." For his lungs were full of Surrey air, his mind saturated with beauty. He entered the inner room with a pleasurable sense of anticipation. Suddenly a shock ran through his frame. What was that? His picture? Yes! His Madonna, more precious to him than his own life, slashed to ribbons!

He strode to his wife's bedroom. She met him on the threshold. "Godfrey," she gasped, "you have been to the studio! Yes, I will tell you the truth. *I* did it! Myself! I *hate* your painting—your art which is more to you than I am! I hate that black-browed woman! I'm glad I've murdered her!"

Godfrey looked at his wife in dumb horror. Then he turned and groped his way blindly downstairs. Once more he locked the studio door behind him and stood before his picture. Then he dropped his head into his hands and sobbed.

* * * * *

Hours later, when Sylvia crept to the studio door and knocked timidly, there was no reply. She ventured to turn the handle. The door opened easily. She peeped in. There was no one there. With a stricken

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face she entered the inner room. On the easel were the tattered fragments of the picture, just as her ruthless hands had left it the day before. Her husband was gone. Something told her that he had left her indeed. She sank into a chair.

"Oh, what have I done? What have I done?" she moaned.

The anguish of her heart was too deep for tears, for now she realised exactly what she *had* done. In a flash of intuition she knew what that picture had meant to her husband. She felt the yearning of his soul to express itself in one great work; she saw the long hours of toil, of hope, of discouragement; of failure, of achievement. She understood it all—now! For Sylvia was not a butterfly. There were depths in her nature all unsuspected by her husband, and dire calamity now stirred them profoundly. Child no longer, she had come into the heritage of her womanhood, and henceforth the capacity for infinite suffering was to be hers.

This, then, was her husband? This great painter stretching out strong, eager hands after the divine. And she had sinned against him past forgiveness.

For hours Sylvia sat there before the wrecked picture, like a figure carved in stone, her heart within her frozen with grief. Then she rose and tenderly fingered the tattered canvas.

"Poor, poor Godfrey," she murmured, "oh how many, many patient strokes of the brush!—how many, many thoughts and feelings he put here. Poor, poor Godfrey!"

Then her attention was arrested by one little portion of the picture which her cruel knife had spared, and she gazed upon it fixedly. It was a little baby's hand, all rounded and dimpled and pink. Sylvia's face suddenly flamed, and a great trembling came upon her. She bent forward and gently kissed the little hand, then with eyes suffused with tears she stole softly from the room.

IV.

After months of terrible silence, Sylvia had a letter from her husband. She opened it feverishly, hope struggling with despair in her heart.

"It can hardly be necessary," wrote Marlow, "for me to tell you that my love for you is dead, if indeed any feeling founded on a delusion can properly be said ever to have existed at all. Under the circumstances it is certainly better that we should not live together: a union so ill-assorted could not bring happiness to either of us. I have the satisfaction of knowing that you can live comfortably on your own income and will not therefore need me in any way. I hold myself free to follow out my career without interference of any sort, and I wish you all happiness.—G. M." There was no address.

Sylvia was sitting with this letter in her hands, her face all hopelessness, when Russell came in for news of Marlow. He had long ago heard the whole story from Sylvia's self-accusing lips, and even this cruel letter roused in him but scant sympathy for her. Had she not ruined a great painter's career and broken a good man's heart? Russell hurried home to his wife.

"News from Godfrey," he said. "But he's gone for good. I'm off on the tramp to find him. My mind misgives me about the dear fellow."

Mrs. Russell saw her husband off with much wifely advice about the care of his health, then promptly went to see Sylvia. For, as she said to herself, "Bob may say what he likes about 'ruined careers' and 'broken hearts,' but it's that poor child I'm most sorry for."

* * * * *

Russell ran Marlow to earth in a little country town in the South much loved of painters. He was shocked to see his old friend so haggard and thin.

"Yes, I've settled here," said Marlow in a hard voice. "I mean to go in for landscape only in future. This is a fine country for that sort of thing, you know. Put you up? Yes, of course, as long as you like."

Marlow volunteered no information about himself, and Russell forbore to ask any questions. He knew that Godfrey had taken nothing away from his old studio, and gathered that he resolved to cut himself off from the past completely.

Poor Marlow had indeed passed through a time of bitter suffering, and it was not surprising that he bore the marks of it on his face. Not till that terrible Monday morning had he realised all that his ruined picture had meant to him: how it had woven itself into the warp and woof of his existence. All his passionate religious hopes and aspirations, all his passionate love of his art, all his best work had gone into that.

Then love had proved traitor. His ideal of maiden sweetness and goodness was shattered. He was indeed doubly bereft. For long months he had wandered about the country, unseen and unknowing, conscious only of hopeless loss. But, after a while, his mental vigour had reasserted itself. He

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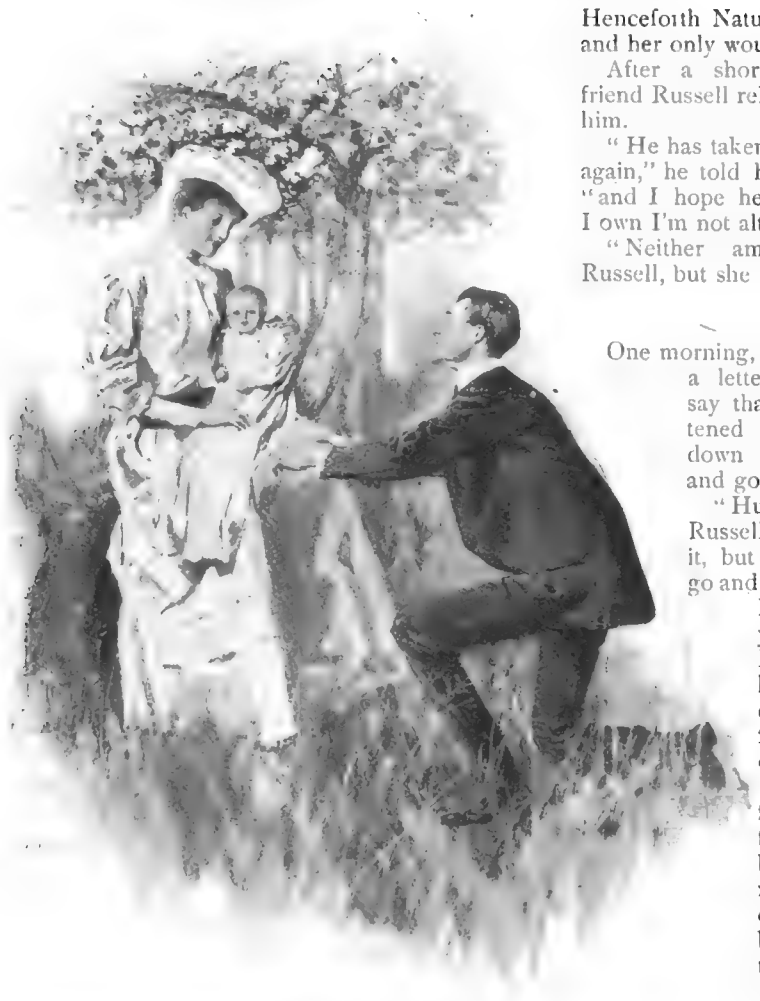

"Oh, Sylvia, forgive me!"

would not allow his life to be spoilt, for, he reflected bitterly, he was not the first man by any means who had been a fool and thrown his heart away on a shallow-pated woman. He would put her, even the thought of her, out of his existence, and look upon his brief married life as an episode to be buried for ever and forgotten. He resolved that he would yet accomplish the good work he used to think he had it in him to do.

There was one chamber in his mind whose door should be sealed for ever. It was a chamber hung with holy thoughts, a beautiful picture of the Madonna and Child enshrined within. He turned with disgust from everything associated with the past. Why had God allowed that thing to happen? No more religious pictures for him! Henceforth Nature should be his god, and her only would he worship.

After a short stay with his old friend Russell reluctantly took leave of him.

"He has taken up the thread of life again," he told his wife on his return, "and I hope he'll be all right. But I own I'm not altogether satisfied."

"Neither am I," thought Mrs. Russell, but she said nothing.

V.

One morning, next year, Russell had a letter from a doctor to say that Marlow was threatened with a serious breakdown and must drop work and go away at once.

"Humph!" said Mrs. Russell, "he doesn't deserve it, but I suppose you must go and cure him. And if you listen to me I'll tell you how to do it." Russell did listen to his wife, and then sped down to Sunwich as fast as train could carry him.

He found his old friend the ghost of his former self—feeble in body and listless in mind. The numerous canvases in his studio bore witness to the astonishing amount of work he had got through.

"You've been overdoing it, old chap," said Russell gently. "You must come away from everything. We'll go off to-morrow on one of our jolly old walking tours, but we'll take things easy and you'll soon be as right as ninepence."

Godfrey's face had a haunted look.

"Fact is, I can't sleep," he said apologetically, "and I get nightmares in the daytime."

Russell understood perhaps better than Marlow what was wrong with him. He knew that a deep heart-wound cannot be cured merely by frantic hard work, nor can the past be annihilated by an effort of will. He was glad, therefore, when Marlow gave himself unresistingly into his hands and allowed him to take him whithersoever he willed.

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Marlow wandered on by his friend's side without seeming to know or care where he was going. But before many weeks had elapsed the gipsy life in the open began to tell on his health, and his nerves recovered their normal tone. Yet long after his physical health was restored he continued in the same state of mental apathy, and showed no desire to return to his work.

One day Russell said:

"I've had a letter from my wife, and she rather wants me home for a few days. Should you mind my leaving you for a bit?"

Though hating to lose his companionship, Marlow felt it would be selfish to detain his friend, and accordingly Russell returned to London.

The next day Marlow found himself wandering about the countryside in a mood of blackest depression. It was an ideal spring morning, and the west country was looking its loveliest, but it awoke no response in Godfrey's heart. Even his new god had deserted him. Nature herself brought him no peace—could not relieve his wretchedness.

But as he wandered through the tangled lane his footsteps were suddenly arrested, and his whole being thrilled into intense life. With a painful contraction of the heart he felt the door of the sealed room swing open. Had he not painted those very orchard trees, those simple sheep in the meadow, the joyous birds among the boughs? And what is this miracle? There is his picture complete! For here sits the Madonna, with a sweet English face, and on her knee the Babe, surely the divine Child! And lo! in her eyes and on her lips that ineffable look which he had sought in vain to put in his own picture! It was a face purified and ennobled by suffering, yet sweet and fresh and young. And the Babe? Godfrey's heart was in his mouth as he looked at the Child—his child and Sylvia's! The little thing was sitting, firm and strong, on his mother's lap, perfectly still; he was looking straight in front of him, with a wise, intent gaze, as if he saw into mysteries hidden from older eyes.

Marlow could bear it no longer. He strode forward and knelt in abasement at his wife's feet.

"Oh, Sylvia, forgive me!" he said brokenly. "In my pride I thought you too small a thing to share in my life-work. But now I bow before you in your greatness, for you have entered a Holy of Holies I am not worthy to reach, and you have seen God face to face! Can you ever forgive me?"

For answer Sylvia lifted the little one and put him into his father's arms.

And so it came about that Godfrey Marlow painted his masterpiece: a fair, sweet English girl, with her babe upon her knees, all the love of Heaven and the love of earth shining in her face: the apple-blossoms round about her, the simple sheep in the meadow, the happy birds among the boughs.

And Mrs. Russell smiled happily as she said to her husband: "If it hadn't been for our little plot where would Marlow's Masterpiece be?"

A REVERIE.

Do you remember, love, that day we parted
Beneath the apple-tree, so long ago?
I really thought that I was broken-hearted—
I wasn't, though.

You were but seventeen, I two years older;
Our tears were mingled in that last good-bye.
But separation made our love grow colder—
I wonder why?

You called me "dearest love" and "darling Harry,"
And on my shoulder your sweet face you hid;
I never thought another man you'd marry—
And yet you did.

I cherish now a most sincere affection
For your sweet girls and merry, happy boys:
It really almost seems a resurrection
Of long-dead joys.

But still within a locket I've a golden
Curl, from a head no longer gold, I fear.
Ah, love! would we were back amid those olden
Days, so dear!

A. V. Thorp.

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CAP AND BELLS

NOT SATISFIED.

MAMMA: "No; you've had enough cake."

THE FOUR-YEAR-OLD: "Oh, mamma! Please can't I have too much?"

* * * * *

HAD TO PAUSE.

BROWN: "But why do you stop so often? Can't you keep up with me?"

TYPEWRITER (who is rather shaky in her orthography): "Oh, yes, but your language is so eloquent that I frequently find myself spellbound."

* * * * *

SOMEONE LIKED THEM.

"What do you think of Dauber's pictures? Pretty bad, aren't they?"

"Yes; and yet I know one man who thinks them very fine, and who owns a lot of them."

"Who, for goodness' sake?"

"Dauber."

* * * * *

A GOOD CONUNDRUM.

"I have a conundrum for you. What kind of a dog is the dog star?"

"I give it up."

"A Skye terrier, of course."

* * * * *

HE'D CHANGE HIS TACTICS.

COLLECTOR: "This is the last time I shall ask for the amount of this bill."

DELINQUENT: "Yes?"

COLLECTOR: "Yes. The next time I shall stand out in the street and yell for it."

* * * * *

HOW COULD HE?

POLITE BUT ABSENT-MINDED BATHER (to friend up to his neck in water): "Ah, Jones, very glad to see you! Won't you sit down?"

GONE TOO FAR.

"I have carried this joke a little too far," remarked the humourist, as he found that he had walked a hundred yards beyond the door of the comic paper office.

* * * *

A MISUNDERSTANDING.

BOATMAN: "Nay, mister, I can't let yer hev me boat just now. There's a heavy swell just comin' up."

'ARRY: "Swell be blowed! Ain't my money as good as 'is?"

* * * * *

MAKING UP THE VALUE.

"My dear Baron, what are you doing? Smoking two cigars at the same time?"

"Well, you see, my dear fellow, in this beastly hole you can't get sixpenny cigars, such as I am in the habit of smoking, so I have to make shift with a couple of threepenny ones."

* * * * *

TOO HARD WORK.

DOCTOR: "Take a stated amount of exertion daily."

PATIENT: "Will it be enough if I walk twice round my wife's theatre hat every day?"

DOCTOR: "You'd better not risk over-exerting yourself at first. Begin with once, and increase the exercise as you feel able."

* * * * *

WHY SHE SUFFERED.

"Yes, she is a woman who has suffered a great deal because of her belief."

"Indeed! And what is her belief?"

"That she can wear a No. 3 shoe on a No. 6 foot."

"that means an Imposter" said White,
"for sure he does not like his sight
to be took the more in
With some copper down ...
his actions will be over-right"

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AFTER THE MATERNAL CHASTISEMENT.
"Oh, dear, I wish you hadn't married pa!"

AN IMPROVEMENT.

"My wife has been studying geology, and the house is so full of stones that I can't find a place to sit down."

"What will you do about it?"

"I've induced her to take up astronomy."

"Is that any better?"

"Of course; she can't collect specimens."

* * * * *

AN AWKWARD BUSINESS.

"Worried is no name for it. Brown is coming round at four o'clock to pay me £3."

"Think he may not come?"

"Oh, he'll come all right, but Jones is due at 4.15 to try to collect £2 I owe him. Suppose he should get here just as I was being paid by Brown!"

* * * * *

THE YANKEE OUTDONE.

Two men—one of them a Yankee—were having an argument as to their respective strengths.

"Why," said the Yankee, "every morning before breakfast I get a bucket and pull up ninety gallons from the well."

"That's nothing," retorted the Britisher. "I get a boat every morning and pull up the river."

A COMPLIMENT GONE ASTRAY.

"As I passed your house last evening," he said, "I thought I heard an angel singing."

"Yes," she answered icily, "I was at the theatre last evening. Mrs. Mulhooley, however, and her twin babies were at our house visiting the cook."

* * * * *

STUPID MAN.

MISS PEASE: "I met Mr. Bean yesterday, Mr. Podd. He said he was a friend of yours."

MR. PODD: "Oh, was that you? He told me he was introduced to a handsome, stylish, well-dressed girl, but couldn't remember her name. From his description I never dreamt it was you."

And then he wondered why she treated him so coldly all of a sudden.

* * * * *

THE BEST WISH.

"Why, howdyedo," says the former adorer, meeting the bride. "I am so glad to see you. I must congratulate you and wish you all happiness."

"O, that is very kind of you," responds the bride, "and I hope you are sincere."

"I am, truly. I hope you'll be as happy as if you had married me."

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HE WON THE BET.

A showman was making a great noise at the front of the exhibition of wonders he had on show. A man standing in the crowd, with a little dog beside him, cried out:

"I'll bet you a quid you can't let me see a lion."

"Done!" said the showman, eagerly. "Put down your money."

The man placed a sovereign in the hand of a bystander, and the showman did the same.

"Now walk this way," said the showman, "and I'll soon convince you. There!" said he triumphantly, "look in that corner at the beautiful Numidian lion."

"I don't see any," responded the other.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the showman.

"I'm blind," was the reply, and in a few minutes the blind man pocketed the two sovereigns and went away.

* * * * *

FOR THE CHILDREN.

MASTER (to new servant): "Why do you always ring that small bell immediately after ringing the regular dinner bell?"

NEW SERVANT: "That's to call the children, sir."

* * * * *

A POOR OBJECTION.

PROUD BEAUTY: "But I can't marry that man, mamma. I don't love him!"

CAREFUL MAMMA: "That is merely a technical objection, Patricia, and must not be allowed to stand in the way of a match so desirable from every point of view."

* * * * *

CAGES FOR LARKS.

At a police-court recently a man was brought up for drunkenness.

THE MAGISTRATE: "What did you want to get drunk for?"

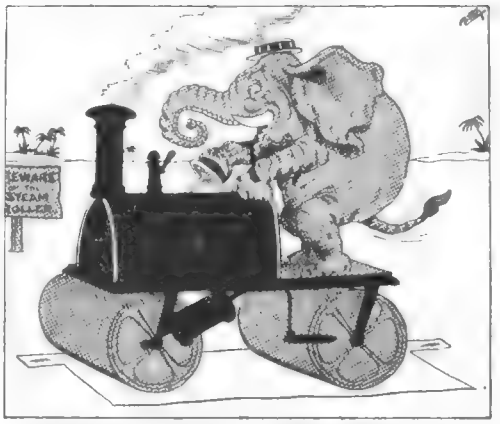
PRISONER: "Oh, it was only for a lark!"

"Oh!" answered the Magistrate smilingly, "we have cages for larks. Go in one for fourteen days."

* *

Householder: "Here, drop that coat and get out."

Burglar: "You be quiet, or I'll wake your wife and give her this letter that you forgot to post."



This is what I call all right! Won't papa be pleased when he finds I've ironed his collars for him?

WHAT IT MEANT.

UNSOPHISTICATED COOK: "If you please, mum, the butcher says I shall get five per cent. on all the orders I give him. What does that mean?"

MISTRESS: "It means, Mary, that we shall have a new butcher."

* * * * *

SUITABLE FOR A KITE.

BOY: "I want to buy some paper."

DEALER: "What kind of paper?"

BOY: "You'd better give me some fly paper—I want to make a kite."

* * * * *

LOOKED THE SAME.

CUSTOMER: "Give me two yards of honesty, please."

SHOP ASSISTANT: "Very sorry, madam, but we are just out of honesty; but I can show you candour, which looks just like it, and is less expensive."

* * * * *

A TRADE DODGE.

SLY SHOPWOMAN: "Really, Miss Antique, the white feather on your hat makes you look at least five years younger."

MISS ANTIQUE: "Well, you may—er—put a couple more white feathers on it."

* * * * *

NOT ENCOURAGING.

COUNTRY PATIENT: "Doctor, I am sorry you have had to come so far from your regular round."

DOCTOR: "Oh, that's all right! I have another patient in the neighbourhood, so I can kill two birds with one stone."

* * * * *

A GAME FOR TWO.

At this moment something came hurling from the gallery, and narrowly missed the gifted tragedian.

Instantly he advanced to the footlights.

"That is a game," he said, in a deep voice, "that two can play at!"

And he took an egg from his pocket and threw it with all his might. It struck one of the pillars of the gallery and scattered itself impartially over fifteen or twenty of the "gods."

He took out another egg, but he did not have to throw it; the first one was sufficient.

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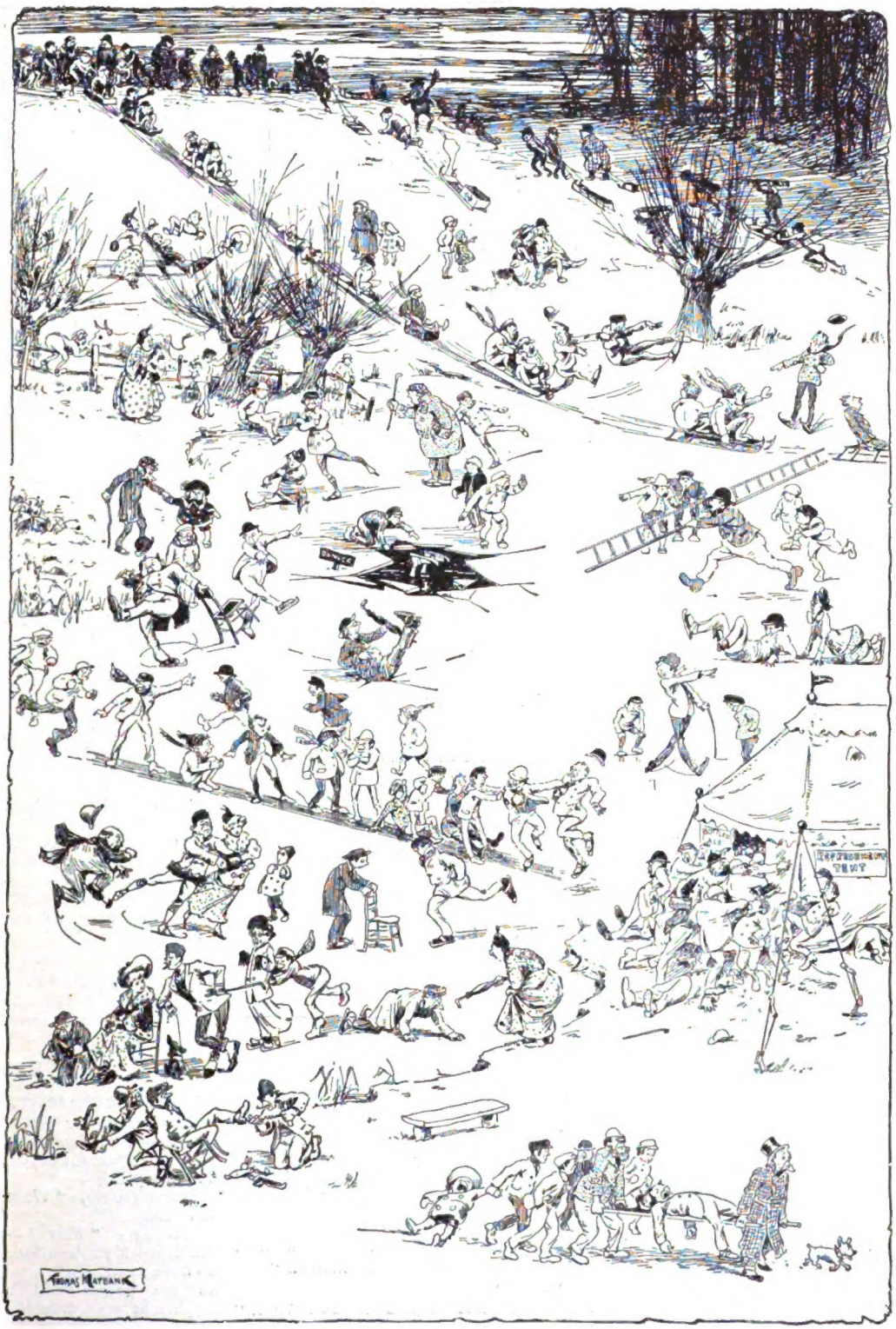

FUN ON OUR VILLAGE POND DURING THE FROST.

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TOO MUCH FOR HIM.

"I say, Gaddersby," said Mr. Smith, as he came into the fishmonger's with a lot of tackle in his hand, "I want you to give me some fish to take home with me. Put them up to look as if they've been caught to-day, will you?"

"Certainly, sir," said the fishmonger. "How many?"

"Oh, you'd better give me three or four barbel. Make it look decent in quantity without appearing to exaggerate, you know."

"Yes, sir. But you'd better take salmon, hadn't you?"

"Why? What makes you think that?"

"Oh, nothing, except that your wife was down here early this afternoon and said if you dropped in with your fishing tackle and a generally woe-begone look, you should take salmon if possible, as she liked that kind better than any other."

Mr. Smith took salmon.

* *

BATHOS.

HE (telling a hairbreadth adventure): "And in the bright moonlight we could see the dark muzzles of the wolves."

SHE (breathlessly): "Oh, how glad you must have been that they had muzzles on!"

* * * * *

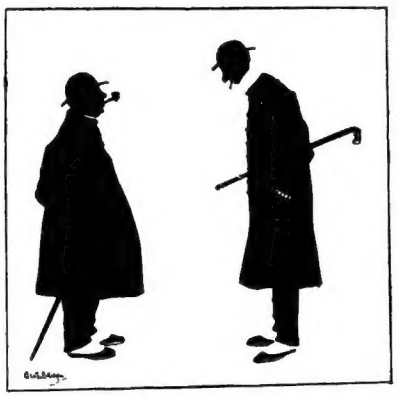
EASY TO ADJUST.

"Mr. Scrooge," said the bookkeeper, "this past week I did the junior clerk's work as well as my own. This being payday, I thought it only right to remind you."

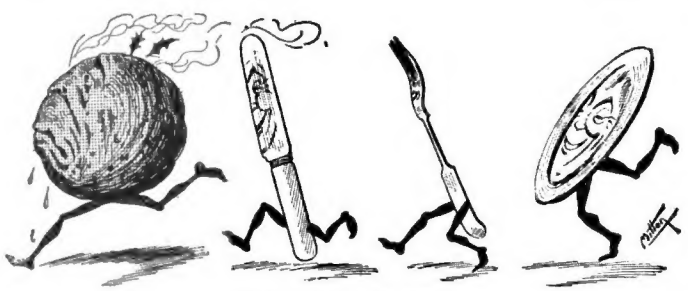
"Very good," said old Scrooge. "Let me see, your salary is two pounds and the clerk's one pound."

"Yes, sir," replied the bookkeeper, beaming expectantly.

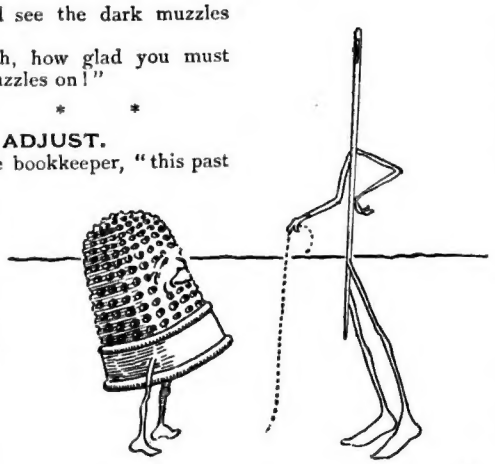
"Then, working half the week for yourself is one pound and the other half for the clerk is ten shillings. Your salary this week will be thirty shillings."



Smith: "I say, Jones, can you pay me that five bob you owe me?"
Jones: "Sorry, Smith, but I haven't got it."
Smith: "Can you lend me ten bob, then?"
Jones: "Certainly, old chap, with pleasure!"



After the Xmas Pudding.



STUMPED!

Thimble: "I daresay you're pretty sharp, my boy, but I know a coat you couldn't sew a button on."
Needle: "Eh! What's that?"
Thimble: "Why, a coat of paint, my boy. Try it."

TOO RICH TO SPELL.

"I wish," said Mrs. Parvenu to her daughter's teacher, "that you would drop spelling from the list of Janet's studies."

"Drop spelling!" exclaimed the teacher. "Why?"

"It is so common," replied Mrs. Parvenu. "Everybody learns to spell."

"But your daughter will need the knowledge," protested the teacher. "She'll need it for her correspondence, and——"

"Enough!" interrupted Mrs. Parvenu haughtily. "Evidently you cannot rise above the common level. My daughter will move in the highest circles of society, and will be rich enough to have a private secretary to write anything that she does not wish to have printed. I do not wish to have her time wasted."

* *

BRUISED WITH IDEAS.

"Your husband is not looking well to-night, Mrs. Rhymer."

"He isn't, and I'm not at all surprised at it."

"No? Has he been overworking himself?"

"It isn't that so much; it's his originality. Why, that man is struck with so many original ideas that his mind must be one mass of bruises."

* * *

A SPECIALIST.

KNICKER: "You say your son is a contractor. What is his special line?"

BOCKER: "Debts."

* * *

A SHY REQUEST.

EDGAR: "Miss Edith, I—er—have something most important to ask you. May I—that is——"

EDITH (softly): "What is it, Edgar?"

EDGAR: "May I—Edith, would you be willing to have our names printed in the papers with a hyphen between them?"

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REPARTEE.

"Pa," said little Willie, "can't you spare enough money to buy me a gun?"

"My son, I am going to get you a gun when I can spare a boy—not before."

* * * * *

UNSPORTSMANLIKE.

"I don't think it was fair," said Bobbie, after his big brother had lost the race. "Jack was ahead almost all the time, but they gave the prize to a man that was ahead only a second just at the end."

* * * * *

A DIFFERENCE.

MAMMA: "Do stop crying, Ethel. You never hear me crying when my hair is combed."

ETHEL: "B—but your h—hair isn't fastened to your head like m—mine is."

* * * * *

TOO BAD.

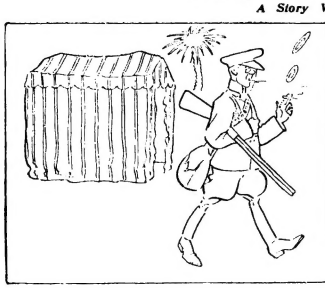
SUBURBANITE: "You've got a new baby at your house, I hear."

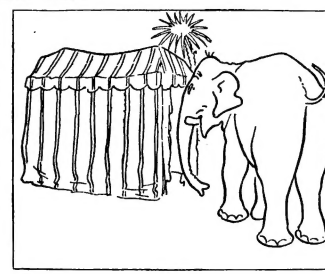
TOWNITE: "Great Scott! can you hear it away there in the suburbs?"

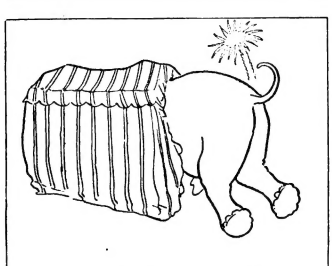
* * * * *

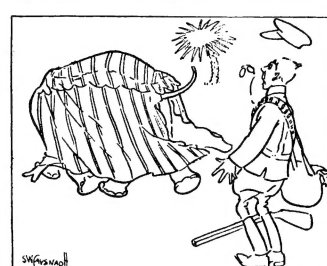
THE MYSTERIOUS MOVING TENT.

A Story Without Words.









SUCH IS FAME.

"I saw your name in print the other day," said Tomlins to a friend, who was very fond of notoriety.

"Where?" asked the latter in a tremor of excitement.

"In the Directory."

* * * * *

A NASTY OPERATION.

NELLIE (who has been to the dentist to have a broken tooth taken out): "Oh, dad, I *am* glad I'm not a cricketer!"

DAD: "Why?"

NELLIE: "Why, in the account of the cricket match it says that at six o'clock stumps were drawn."

POLITENESS ITSELF.

STIGINS: "Who is that gentleman with whom you were walking a while ago?"

PENNYBUNKER: "He is an original humourist."

STIGINS: "But why did you lift your hat continually while you were talking to him?"

PENNYBUNKER: "He was telling me some original jokes, and whenever I recognise an old acquaintance I always lift my hat."

* * * * *

IMPOSSIBLE.

GRACE: "Miss Passé will catch cold if she sits on the piazza much longer."

ROSALIE: "No, she won't. She's sat there for years and never caught anything."

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Some Advice to Authors.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL!

"So here we are again!" as the clown says when he somersaults on to the stage. Christmas is at hand, with its mistletoe and plum pudding, gaiety and double numbers. For my part I have done my best in a humble way to add to your Christmas entertainments, and I hope you will enjoy the little feast of literature I have taken great pains to prepare for you. I have tried to include something for everyone, so that father, mother, and the children may each in turn sit over the fire and dip deep into these pages. I hope you will all think of me when you read the ROYAL, and return with interest all the good wishes which I send you.

THE ITCH OF PUBLICITY.

Actors and playwrights have told me many strange stories of stage-fever; how men and women—especially women—have gone down on their knees to the manager and offered all they possess if only he will give them the smallest speaking part in a play. And as an editor I can cap these stories with instances almost as sensational of the lengths people will go to get their names in print. Scarcely a week passes without my receiving letters from would-be writers of every position imploring me to publish their efforts. And in half the instances I am told that the writer expects nothing for the contribution, but wishes his or her name to appear as the author.

A TOUCHING APPEAL.

One very touching appeal found its way into my office not very long ago. The writer—a girl—sent me a poem, which was not bad, but was totally unsuited to my requirements, and accompanied it with a letter, very pathetically worded, saying that the writer was a helpless cripple, and that if I would only bring a little light into her grey existence by publishing her poem, she would not ask for even a penny as an honorarium, and remember me gratefully to the end of her life.

Though very sorry for her, I was adamant, and returned the poem.

Now comes the sequel.

A few days later I happened to meet a man who came from the same village as my unhappy correspondent. It was a very small place somewhere in Sussex. I asked him casually whether he had ever heard of Miss ——.

"Rather!" he replied. "I know her very well. Why, she and I won a tennis tournament only the day before yesterday."

I sat up.

"A tennis tournament! But she is a helpless cripple!" I exclaimed.

He burst out laughing.

"A helpless cripple! You should just see her playing tennis and hockey. A very clever girl, too. I daresay she writes for you."

"No," I assured him, "she doesn't! And tell her from me, when next you see her, that I am delighted to hear of her recovery."

A WORD OF ADVICE.

This is only a single, but certainly rather a gross, instance of the lengths people will go to in order to see their names in print. Since receiving that touching appeal and learning the truth about it, I have become somewhat cynical, hard-hearted, and sceptical, and look with great distrust on the contributions of people who try to work on my compassion with harrowing tales of incurable disease and poverty.

If you are very anxious to get your masterpieces published, do not follow the lead of these good people and try to excite the cupidity or pity of the editor. It is a bad plan. Editors are human, after all (I have often been compelled to use this phrase), and naturally look with suspicion on goods which are violently thrust upon them.

Let the best argument for the success of your contribution be its excellence.

That is the sort of argument all editors are only too pleased to listen to.

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